

British team off to Iraq seeking business chances

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A group of British businessmen headed for Baghdad on Friday, joining the stepped up flow of international traders into the Iraqi capital amid expectations that the U.N. sanctions imposed on that country are on their way to be eased if not lifted altogether.

The 20-member group, which arrived here Wednesday, is expected to spend about a week in Iraq, meeting government officials and private sector businessmen.

Stephen Crouch of the British Middle East Interests Group said the visit was mostly aimed at gathering "market intelligence" that would allow the businessmen to update themselves about the situation in Iraq.

"There are many such groups visiting Iraq," Mr. Crouch told the Jordan Times.

Some members of the group, whose visit has been cleared by the British government — one of the most ardent opponents of any easing or lifting of the sanctions against Iraq — were expected to return to Amman in four or five days while others might extend their visit to include areas beyond Baghdad.

The identities of the businessmen have not been disclosed because of what Reuters described as possible adverse publicity in Britain. But they were from a 30-member British business team which held talks in Amman on British-Jordanian trade and industrial opportunities.

The team's visit to Iraq was announced in January after the British government allowed it to go ahead with it.

Mr. Crouch said the British Middle East Interests Group, which he represents, was not directly involved in the visit to Iraq although some of the visitors are linked to the group.

Three other British businessmen are already in the Iraqi capital ahead of the group which left Friday.

"What British companies are concerned about with Iraq is that they are losing touch with who really runs the country," Mr. Crouch was quoted as saying by Reuters.

"The companies simply want to keep in touch and appraise what future requirements might be," said Mr. Crouch, in an apparent reference to expectations that the

UNHRC criticises Israel

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) decided Friday to end 28 years of scrutiny of violations in South Africa, but reiterated its annual criticism of Israel.

The 53-nation body unanimously agreed to drop South Africa from its future agenda, and thanked two special working groups for efforts to "eliminate apartheid in South Africa and to establish a non-racial and democratic society."

"The commission has today closed an important chapter in its history," said Chief South African delegation Rianan Eksteen. "It is a chapter that neither South Africa nor the commission hopes to reopen."

The nation's first all-race elections were held last April, resulting in a majority for the African National Congress (ANC).

Condemnation of "racial discrimination in South Africa occupied a large chunk of the commission's annual six-week session ever since the

country was placed under special scrutiny in 1967.

For years it shared the slot of most criticised nation with Israel. Thanks to the developing country majority on the commission, many African and Arab nations with poor human rights records escaped attention.

That has slowly changed, with investigations into alleged abuses in countries like Iran, Iraq, Zaire and Sudan. However, the commission's agenda is still shaped as much by politics as by human rights concerns.

China, for instance, has managed to block any criticism of its abuses, and Russia is likely to escape this year with a mild rebuke for its bombings in Chechnya.

On a packed day of voting, a resolution welcoming progress in the Middle East peace process received unanimous backing.

"After almost 50 years of hostility, a peace of the brave is being crafted before our eyes," said U.S. delegate Stanley Plesent. "We have

started down the road to human dignity. That progress is reflected in this resolution," he added. The United States, Russia and Norway put forward the motion.

A U.N. special investigator, former Swiss Foreign Minister Rene Felber, earlier this month said his mandate should end because progress in the peace process was more important than ritual condemnation of Israel which was ignored by the Tel Aviv government.

However, other commission decisions were little changed from previous years.

It voted by 27-1 in favour of a proposal by Arab countries demanding Israel stop violations and withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. The United States voted against. There were 22 abstentions, including European nations.

A resolution demanding Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights was passed by 25-1 with 23 abstentions.

U.S. to pay Italian bank \$400m to settle Iraq claims

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government has agreed to pay \$400 million to settle claims by a major Italian bank whose Atlanta branch funneled \$5.5 billion in loans to Iraq in the years before the Gulf war, the Justice Department announced Thursday.

The money will be paid to settle the Italian bank's claim for more than \$450 million resulting from Iraq's default on U.S. government-guaranteed loans with which Iraq bought a wide variety of American farm products.

Iraq defaulted on the loans in August 1990 after it invaded Kuwait. Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), which is owned by the Italian government, and nine other banks that helped finance sales of U.S. farm commodities to Iraq filed claims for reimbursement under the Agriculture Department's export-credit guarantee programme.

Now that guarantee programme, known as the Commodity Credit Corporation, will pay BNL \$400 million.

Some Democratic lawmakers, led by Representative Henry B. Gonzalez of Texas, have alleged that Iraq used at least some of the money obtained under the CCC programme to develop its military and nuclear arsenals before it invaded Kuwait.

Payment of BNL's claim had been held up for several years by a criminal investigation of its Atlanta branch, which funneled the \$5.5 billion in illegal loans to Iraq, the Justice Department noted in a statement.

The former manager of the branch, Christopher Drogoul, pleaded guilty to wire fraud and submitting false reports to bank regulators and was sentenced in November 1993 to three years in prison. Several co-defendants also received prison terms.

Last month, a 1½-year investigation by a federal prosecutor concluded that Bush administration officials did not illegally arm Iraq through the agricultural export programme and that BNL's top officials in Rome were not responsible for the fraud in Atlanta.

That conclusion cleared the way for the settlement to reimburse BNL.

"Now that the investigation of BNL is complete, the (CCC) is honouring its guarantees," the Justice Department statement said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Europe has no role in Mideast peace talks — Hariri

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon said on Friday the European Union (EU) has no significant role to play in Arab-Israeli peace talks. "Europe's role in the Arab-Israeli talks is not essential nor effective... the United States is the main power behind pushing the peace talks forward," Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said. He was commenting to Lebanese journalists on last week's tour of Syria, Israel, Gaza and Lebanon by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe at the head of an EU delegation seeking to push forward the Middle East peace process.

Cyprus capital changes name to Lefkosia

NICOSIA (R) — Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, has changed its name to Lefkosia as part of a campaign on the island to standardise spellings of place names. The change was voted unanimously by the municipal council late on Thursday makes the spelling conform to the way the city's name is pronounced in Greek, Mayor Lellos Demetriades said. "The government wants to standardise geographical names and Nicosia... is spelled as Lefkosia. I suggested that next to Lefkosia we have in brackets Nicosia to avoid confusion," Mr. Demetriades told Reuters. The decision must be reviewed by the republic's council of ministers as a matter of routine. Mr. Demetriades said the council had held up the name change briefly to consider whether it might cause confusion with the Turkish name for the city, which is Lefkosia.

Stop smoking U.S. cigarettes — Hizbollah

BEIRUT (AFP) — The leader of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah movement in Lebanon, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has called for a boycott of U.S. cigarettes and luxury items. "We call on our people to boycott U.S. products which they can do without, such as cigarettes and luxury items... because America is an economic market controlled by giant companies which control politics and the military," he said. Sheikh Nasrallah denounced the United States as the "real and principal enemy" of Islam and said the boycott should spread to other Arab and Muslim countries. He was speaking at a rally in the Bekaa Valley on Thursday night to commemorate the third anniversary of the death of his predecessor Sheikh Abbas Mussawi, who was killed in an Israeli raid. Hizbollah's spiritual guide, Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, issued a similar call for a boycott last month in retaliation for Washington's decision to freeze U.S. assets of Muslim fundamentalist organisations and leaders.

Dissident to be tried in Iran court

TEHRAN (AFP) — A revolutionary court will try a nationalist opposition figure and former general who was arrested four months ago after he accused Iran of human rights violations, an opposition group said Friday. Azizollah Amir-Rahimi, 75, learned "he would be tried in a revolutionary court" when he was allowed to see his family at the prosecutor's office here on Thursday, the nationalist Party of the People of Iran (PPI) said. No trial date was given. The revolutionary courts were set up after the 1979 Islamic revolution to try major offences and are reputed for handing down stiff sentences.

NPT needs to be revised before extension — Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran values the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but changes need to be made before it is adopted for an indefinite period, Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said.

Mr. Zarif, quoted by the official Iranian news agency IRNA, said the treaty, which was adopted in 1970 and has 170 signatories, had "failed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons."

"Iran attaches great importance to the NPT, but certain revisions are necessary," he said. All countries with nuclear arms should set "an exact date when they plan to destroy their weapons prior to the treaty's extension."

Washington is urging signatories to renew the treaty indefinitely at a meeting due to be held in New York in April instead of adopting it for another limited period.

Mr. Zarif, who is in charge of the ministry's legal and international affairs, argued that the "number of countries with access to nuclear weapons has increased after the signing of the treaty, with Israel being a notable example."

Furthermore, "the big powers have refused to transfer their nuclear technologies to smaller countries for

peaceful purposes, despite the commitments made in the NPT," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Zarif, accused the United States for pressuring Russia to stop its nuclear cooperation with Iran.

"This is an interference in the internal affairs of other countries and a violation of NPT regulations," he said.

Russia is helping Iran to complete a half-finished nuclear energy plant at the southern port of Bushehr, on the Gulf, on which German engineers had been working before the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Moscow has said that it would help Iran develop its nuclear energy industry despite U.S. warnings that Tehran might turn nuclear material for military purposes.

But U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Monday that the United States would continue to pressure Russia not to hand over nuclear technology to the Islamic republic.

"We have abided by all the commitments to the NPT as the international Atomic Energy Agency has determined after inspecting our facilities," Mr. Zarif said.

Officials have said previously that Iran may not sign an indefinite extension of the treaty if Israel refuses to join.

Arab-American blames Israelis for mistreatment, Americans for apathy

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Samih Jabber left Chicago last week with plans to spend time with family in his native Jerusalem. Instead, he was jailed four days and interrogated with a hood over his head and hands tied behind his back, he says.

The Israeli suspect, Mr. Jabber and his cousin Mohammad Barakat, like him a long-time Chicago resident and naturalised U.S. citizen, are carrying cash for the Muslim fundamentalist Islamic Jihad. They were arrested upon arrival in the country Feb. 9.

The group, opposed to peace talks and dedicated to Israel's destruction, has claimed the suicide bombing that killed 20 soldiers and a civilian in central Israel on Jan. 22.

In an interview with the Associated Press Thursday at his mother's Jerusalem home, Mr. Jabber, who was released Sunday without any charges pressed, saying the money he was carrying was meant to pay for a new addition to his mother's house.

He said he was happy to be leaving Israel and blamed U.S. officials for not doing enough to ease his plight.

"It is the ambition of all Palestinians to come back and invest in their homeland after struggling (to make money) for so many years," said Mr. Jabber. "Unless... we are safe to come to this coun-

try, there is no reason for us to come back," he added.

A resident of Chicago for 26 years, Mr. Jabber owns a supermarket and is chairman of the American-Arab Chamber of Commerce there. His wife, children and two grandchildren also live in the city.

He and Mr. Barakat were detained at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv upon arrival Feb. 9, carrying a total of \$153,475.

Mr. Jabber said he was carrying \$19,000 in cash and a check for \$69,475 from a U.S. real estate sale he just closed. Mr. Barakat, 36, who owns an ice-cream parlor in Chicago, had \$5,000 in cash and \$60,000 in a check.

The Israelis detained them for seven hours at the airport and "just kept asking about the money we had," Mr. Jabber said.

Then they handcuffed the two men and took them to a prison in the southern coastal town of Ashkelon, where he was held for four days, and Mr. Barakat for seven. They are both now free without any charges pressed.

Mr. Jabber complained U.S. consular officials did not try to help win their release.

"I put the blame on the American embassy most of all for not protecting Arab-Americans when they travel abroad," he said. "I was in jail for four days, my cousin for seven, and nobody con-

tacted me to ask what happened or why. This is bad."

Liz Perez, a spokeswoman for the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem, said only that the consulate is aware of Mr. Jabber's case but would not comment on his allegations.

"The first two days were a nightmare," Mr. Jabber said, recalling his interrogation.

He said a hood was placed over his head, and his hands were tied behind his back, handcuffed to a small, hard chair on which he sat, as loud music waited in a cell a metre square.

"The hood stunk. It stayed on my head all the time so that I could hardly breathe... I had to call them many times just to let some air into it because I have asthma."

After two days, Mr. Jabber said he was transferred to another, slightly larger cell, where he remained until his release.

"I never had such a terrible experience," he said.

Mr. Jabber, who maintains he came with hopes of investing in Palestinian housing projects, now has lost faith in Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement.

"I am a peaceful man and I am against any terrorist acts from both sides. We were happy to see the peace process," he said. "I am going back to the States as soon as I can. I don't want to stay here."

Israeli police pelted with eggs while hunting for settler

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (AFP) — Israeli police were pelted with rotten eggs and buckets of water as they tried to arrest a settler leader in the occupied West Bank on Friday.

Baruch Marzel, a leader of the outlawed Kach movement, evaded house arrest on Wednesday to pray at the grave in nearby Kyriat Arba of Hebron mosque killer Baruch Goldstein.

Settlers kept six policemen at bay with rotten eggs and buckets of water to prevent them from arresting Mr. Marzel, who has a mobile phone and is constantly alerted of police movements.

Police left empty-handed. "I am not afraid of the police," Mr. Marzel told AFP after visiting the grave

of the man he calls "holy" after murdering 30 people in a Hebron mosque last Feb. 25.

The grave is about five kilometres from the centre of Hebron, where Mr. Marzel lives. He had to go through at least three army posts to reach the settlement.

"I went with some other people who are also under house arrest," he boasted, but refused to give their names.

The anti-Arab Kach movement was outlawed after the massacre and a dozen of its leaders, including Mr. Marzel, were arrested for several months. All have since been released, although the movements of several are restricted.

Europarlament rules out early accord on Turkey

STRASBOURG (R) — The European Parliament on Thursday threw further doubt on European Union (EU) plans for a lucrative customs deal with Turkey, saying Ankara's human rights record was too poor for the deal to be allowed to go through.

Europarlamentarians adopted a resolution describing Turkey's rights record as "too grave to allow for the formation of the proposed custom union at present."

They said they would not approve a deal granting Turkey access to EU markets unless they heard reports of progress in the human rights area.

Under the Maastricht treaty, the parliament, the EU's only directly elected body, has the power to block deals

such as the customs union. European Union foreign ministers have been working hard to agree a deal that would allow Greece, Turkey's long-time rival, to drop its veto of the customs union.

In exchange for Athens lifting its objections, the EU would begin negotiations on EU membership with Cyprus six months after the end of the bloc's review of its own future, which is due to begin next year.

Greece is keen to see Cyprus, partitioned into Greek and Turkish communities since 1974, join the union. It has, however, been holding off lifting its veto, demanding various clarifications and concessions.

The customs union, which foresees sharp two-way reductions in trade barriers by

1996, would give Turkey some of the closest links to the EU of a non-member country and unblock as much as \$1 billion in aid.

Thursday's move by the parliament means that even if Greece does lift its veto at a scheduled March 6 meeting in Brussels, major hurdles still lie ahead.

Europarlamentarians have long been critical of Turkey's human rights record, particularly its treatment of its Kurdish minority.

In their resolution, they urged the Turkish government to reform the country's constitution "to better guarantee the protection of democracy and human rights."

They said they would make approval of the customs union conditional on interim

progress reports.

British socialist Pauline Green, who heads the assembly's largest single political group, said on Tuesday that parliament should reconsider the question in September.

EU member states have also raised the issue of human rights in Turkey, but tend to agree that helping Turkey economically is better than keeping it in the cold.

"Isolating Turkey would not benefit the democratic forces but the trade must be linked to human rights," Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen said on Wednesday after talks with her Turkish counterpart, Murat Karayalcin.

Turkey's Islam-based Welfare Party (RP) said on Thursday the proposed customs deal with Europe amounted to treason.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-1P

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Cocoon Minutes
17:30 One Le Millier Gagne
18:00 Association Bien Faitiers
19:00 News in French
19:15 Pa Uti Pas Revera
19:30 Ramadan in the World
20:10 The Cape Rebel
21:10 Natural Lies
22:00 News in English
22:20 "Danielle Steel's Fine Things"
23:59 Stay the Night

PRAYER TIMES
06:54 (Sunrise) Duma
06:12 Dhuhr
11:00 'Asr
14:58 Maghrib
18:45 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sydney, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 61757
Terrenceville Church Tel. 62366
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel.
628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
717131.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
717261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151.
Antonian International Church Tel.
652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624328.
German-speaking Evangelical Con-
gregation Tel. 684195.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman
Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Depart-
ment of Meteorology.
Skies will be partly cloudy with a
chance of scattered showers and
winds southeasterly moderate. In
Aqaba, winds will be northerly
moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 5 / 14
Aqaba 10 / 21
Djorin 9 / 18
Jordan Valley 10 / 21

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 78121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 396390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 630300
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Rati Zaitoun 888685
Dr. Mahmoud Amneh 888883
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 744685
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairokh pharmacy 626762
Al Salam pharmacy 630730
Yacoub pharmacy 649495
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

BRIDJ:
Dr. Ali Al Shogairi 246140
Akudis pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Rajib Sagor 901290
Khalif pharmacy 985417

AMMAN MUNICIPALITY
Complaints 897467
Complaints 371111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 650100
Jordan Electricity Authority
Electric Power 815615
Complaints 634381
J Flight Information 08-53200

QUEEN ALIA INTL. AIRPORT 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 642816
Akilch Maternity, J. Ann 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/14
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843845
Al-Musabir Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Abli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajirah 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafah 751112/6
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital 771013
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)905660
Al-Hilma Modern Hospital (09)909950
BRIDJ:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)255555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)27275

IBO AL NAFES HOSPITAL (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia In-
ternational Airport Tel. (08)53200-
5, where it should always be ver-
ified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)
06:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:15 New Delhi (RJ)
09:45 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 London, Berlin (RJ)
10:25 Colombo (RJ)
10:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
11:35 Cairo (RJ)
12:45 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
03:15 London, Aqaba (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)
06:25 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Aqaba (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:35 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
11:40 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:40 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
19:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:35 Larnaca (RJ)
20:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
04:10 London (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:20 Vienna (OS)
16:10 Rome, Damascus (AZ)
18:15 Dubai (EK)
19:00 Larnaca (CY)
21:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:00 Cairo (MS)
22:45 London (BA)
23:05 Athens (OA)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)

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Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)
06:25 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Aqaba (RJ)
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12:40 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
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04:10 London (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
07:30 Larnaca, Rome (AZ)
07:40 Beirut (FE)
13:50 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Dubai (EK)
20:35 Sania (YV)
22:40 Larnaca (CY)
23:05 Cairo (MS)
23:59 Damascus, Paris (AF)

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04:20 Vienna (OS)
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13:50 Vienna (OS)
19:15 Dubai (EK)
20:35 Sania (YV)
22:40 Larnaca (CY)
23:05 Cairo (MS)
23:59 Damascus, Paris (AF)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700 / 400
Banana 680
Banana (Muhannar) 140 / 80
Cabbage 220 / 120
Carrot 140 / 80
Cauliflower 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 200 / 150
Cucumbers (small) 400 / 300
Eggplant 250 / 180
Garlic 100 / 80
Grape Fruit 280 / 170
Lemon 200 / 120
Marrow (large) 180 / 100
Marrow (small) 300 / 200
Onion (green) 340 / 200
Onion (dry) 340 / 200
Orange 200 / 120
Peanut (hot) 1100 / 800
Pepper (sweet) 480 / 300
Potato 360 / 220
Radish 180 / 100
Spinach 120 / 80
String Beans 300 / 200
Tomato 180 / 120
Turnip 180 / 120

Home

Embassy in Amman close, as early as possible

Sweden to expand to Jordan, e

to Jordan, e

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government of Sweden intends to expand the level of technical aid to Jordan as a means to bolster its ties with the Kingdom and help it meet the requirements of development, according to Sweden's Ambassador to Jordan Christian Bausch Friday.

The ambassador said that Sweden had been providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Public Works, the Traffic Department to improve the condition of roads and reduce the number of accidents, to the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), the Jordan Electricity Authority as well as the Department of Antiquities.

He said that since it assumed office last autumn, the Swedish government had taken a decision to expand technical assistance to the Kingdom and promote its economic and political ties with the countries of the Middle East region.

Referring to a recent Swedish government decision to apply austerity measures, the ambassador said the move was needed "in view of the serious financial crisis the Kingdom of Sweden was facing at the moment."

Each government department in Sweden has been instructed to cut down

Australian tr arrives for ta

strengthening

AMMAN (J.T.) — Australia's Trade Minister Bob Carr arrived in Amman today on a three-day visit to meet with government officials and the business community on strengthening trade and economic relations

IN BRIEF

Embassy in Amman not to close, as earlier decided
Sweden to expand aid to Jordan, envoy says
By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

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expenses, the Foreign Ministry, for its part, is bound to save \$24 million, said Mr. Bausch.

An initial decision taken by Sweden to close down 15 diplomatic missions abroad to save funds was cancelled and only two embassies and two consulates are to be affected by the decision.

"I am happy to say that Jordan is excluded from the Foreign Ministry's decision which was taken for purely financial reasons," said the ambassador.

"Since there is no political reason behind the austerity programme, the Foreign Ministry in Stockholm has decided to implement the programme by not closing diplomatic missions but rather through changing the approach and through a shift in the concept," continued the ambassador.

He said that the Foreign Ministry hopes to ensure the success of the austerity programme for at least three coming years by cutting down on expenses like diplomats' benefits, opting for cheaper housing for them and other similar means.

Despite the austerity programme, the ambassador added, Sweden will continue to supply capital aid to the poor countries, especially those in Africa, through the European Union (EU) which Sweden has joined since the beginning of this year.

Australian trade team arrives for talks on strengthening ties

AMMAN (J.T.) — Australia's Trade Minister Bob McMullan arrived in Amman Friday on a three-day visit to Jordan for talks with government officials and the business community on strengthening trade and economic ties between Australia and Jordan.

In an arrival statement, the Australian minister expressed his happiness for the visit and his country's satisfaction with the level of economic and trade relations with the Kingdom.

He stressed Canberra's desire to bolster Jordanian-Australian relations and increase the volume of trade between the two countries.

The Australian minister, who is due to open his meetings with Jordanian officials Saturday, is accompanied by a large team of Australian businessmen representing major Australian firms.

Mr. McMullan is also due to lead the Australian side to the joint Jordanian-Australian Economic and Trade Committee meetings to explore further ways to promote trade.

Australia hopes to increase its sales of livestock, meat, dairy products and cereal to the Kingdom, and Jordan hopes to increase its sales of phosphate and fertilisers and potash to Australia, according to government and Australian embassy sources.

Mr. McMullan, who was welcomed at the airport by Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb, is also due to formally inaugurate the regional office for the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation (AMLC) located in Jabal Amman. The office is entrusted with the task of promoting Australian trade with Middle Eastern countries, including Jordan.

The Amman Chamber of Commerce announced Friday that Mr. McMullan and members of the Australian delegation are due to hold a meeting Sunday with Jordanian merchants and businessmen led by Haidar Murad, president of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce to discuss trade prospects.

Mr. Murad said that the Jordanian side will try to urge the Australians to import more Jordanian products to help adjust the balance of trade between the two countries.

Federation sources said that the Australian delegation's visit assumes significance especially as it comes at the start of the peace era in the Middle East.

Jordan, which enjoys a central location in the area, hopes to attract foreign investments and promote its trade links with other countries, said the sources.

The Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) also announced that Mr. McMullan and the accompanying delegation will hold a general meeting with the Jordanian businessmen Saturday, led by JBA Chairman Hamdi Tabbaa.



FRIDAY SERMONS — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attends Friday prayers at the Jubelha grand mosque. The Crown Prince listened to the Friday sermon which focused on the lessons learnt from the Badr battle which took place on 17 Ramadan between Prophet Mohammad's followers and his opponents who mobilised their forces against him in a bid to stop the Islamic dawa from spreading into the Arab Peninsula. The Friday preacher said the Badr battle was a turning point in the history of the Islamic dawa. Also attending Friday prayer were senior military and civil official (Petra photo)

Businesses warned against 'unclear' potential Nigerian clients

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian businessmen have been warned against doing business with any Nigerian company without clearing the background of the potential client with the Nigerian authorities, officials and businessmen said Friday.

The warning was issued after cases surfaced of a new Nigerian scam involving manufacturers of satellite dishes in Jordan, they said.

Nigeria is internationally notorious for genuine-sounding deals that hold out promises of millions of dollars in quick profits but turn out to be nothing but scams.

Law enforcement in this African country is also weak, and many who have had experience in dealing with Nigerian firms say that a large segment of the officialdom also appeared to be partners in crime with common.

The officials and businessmen said the latest warning was issued by the Amman Chamber of Commerce, which had received a notification from the Nigerian embassy in Baghdad.

According to the officials and businessmen, the new Nigerian scam involved orders for satellite dishes, a mushrooming industry in Jordan.

They said manufacturers received orders for satellite dishes by the dozen but there were no letters of credit — the accepted traditional way of doing business — to support the order.

Instead, the importer, "in order to avoid costly banking charges and delays — as Nigerians are anxious to use the dishes to watch football games," would offer to settle the payment by cheque against shipping documents.

The orders gathered additional air of authenticity, given that Nigeria was supposed to be hosting the World Youth Soccer Cup. The games have been cancelled but it appears that the con scheme was hatched at the height of expectations that they would go ahead as planned.

"The cheques issued by the so-called importers turned out to be forged, and there was no legal recourse by the exporter to recover his money since the importers had ceased to exist at the addresses as given in the orders," said an official of the Amman Chamber of Commerce.

Thousands of offices operate in Lagos, the Nigerian capital, which offer "address" facilities without question, allowing the confidence tricksters to have a "respectable" address in Lagos but with little legitimacy.

"You can change office addresses in Lagos more easily than you can change your shirt," commented a Jordanian who studied in Africa.

The scam over satellite dishes is a revised version of a con scheme which seems to have petered out in the last two years. That scheme involved authentic-sounding invitations to Jordanian businessmen to help spirit tens of millions of dollars out of Nigeria — described as commission to be paid to senior Nigerian government officials that needed a foreign cover to be transferred outside the country — and receive up to 20 per cent as fees for "services rendered."

Hundreds, if not thousands, in Jordan received such invitations during the late 1980s and early 90s. Many took up the invitation and went ahead, but most of them stepped back at a stage when several thousand dollars had to be committed into the scam before the "millions" could be extracted. But several others threw caution to the winds, went "all the way," and never heard of the thousands they paid let alone the promised millions.

Again, none of the victims — not only from Jordan but from practically every country — had legal recourse to recover their money simply because the very illegality of the scheme dissuaded them from approaching the Nigerian government with complaints.

The determined few who went after their money to Lagos suffered more losses — some were kept hostage in their hotel rooms until their families paid ransom — and were often expelled from the country on trumped-up charges.

Jordan, PNA reach detailed trade accord

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) have reached a detailed agreement on trade, as called for in the accord signed by the Kingdom and the PNA in January, clearing the way for direct trade and setting out items that would enjoy preferential treatment from the two sides.

It was the first Jordan-PNA agreement reached after the signing of the broadest agreement and six other sectoral accords on Jan. 26 by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and PNA President Yasser Arafat.

The accord replaces all effective agreements that guided Palestinian products through the Kingdom since 1967.

More significantly, it opens the door for Jordanian exports, albeit limited, to the Palestinian market for the first time since 1967.

The trade agreement, drawn in three days of talks between a PNA team headed by economic and trade expert Samir Huleihel and Jordanian officials led by Minister of Industry and Trade Assistant Under-Secretary Shawkat Haddadin, now awaits final endorsement by the Jordanian government and the PNA cabinet based in Gaza.

The accord covers the Palestinian autonomous territories of Gaza and Jericho as well as the rest of the West Bank where the PNA hopes to expand its self-rule in negotiations with Israel.

The PNA team left Amman on Friday. The trade accord is expected to be placed before the PNA cabinet during its regular weekly meeting on Saturday and, given the urgency to launch direct trade, Mr. Arafat is expected to give his endorsement soon to the agreement.

No details were immediately available on the goods that the agreement covers, but, in principle, officials said, more than 100 industrial products are included in a list of goods for preferential treatment.

These goods will enjoy complete duty-free status, but local sales tax will be applied on them.

Another agreement that streamlined agricultural trade between the two sides is expected to take effect immediately.

This accord was sorted out in talks between Minister of Agriculture Mansour Ben Tarif and Azzam Tubbeh, under-secretary of agriculture in the PNA.

Further talks will be held between the two sides to work out the mechanisms to guide export-import operations.

Jordan will continue to allow the transit of Palestinian produce through the Kingdom's territory but the Palestinian authority will issue its own certificates of origin instead of a Jordanian one used since 1967, Reuter reported.

It was not immediately clear whether the trade accord set any ceiling for imports and exports between the Kingdom and the Palestinian territories. Jordan had been aiming at a ceiling-free accord and the Palestinians have been arguing that they could not accept such an arrangement because of their limited import volume that they also want to use while negotiating trade accords with other parties.

Furthermore, an economic accord signed by the PNA and Israel in April binds the Palestinians into arrangements that do not permit free trade with Jordan, they say. The list of items drawn up on Thursday includes the items that Israel would permit the PNA to import from Jordan under the April agreement.

Meanwhile, Mr. Huleihel was quoted as saying that the list of duty-free products would speed up deals between the private sectors of the two sides.

Minister of Trade Ali Abul Ragheb told Reuter that final touches to the agreement would be put during a meeting with Palestinian Economy Minister Ahmad Qouria in late February.

According to Reuter, the goods were defined as complementary and non-competitive — meaning that none of the products given preferential treatment will pose a threat to the local products.

Jordanian officials have said that the Israel-PNA economic agreement, under which Israel effectively maintained its role as the dominant market power in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, restricted the scope of Jordanian-Palestinian trade.

The Israel-PNA agreement is very detailed and specifically lists items that the self-rule authority could import from Jordan and excludes many products that Jordanian businessmen say they could sell to the Palestinians.

The Israeli argument is that the Jewish state cannot allow such products to enter the Palestinian territories with whom it has a free-trade accord since the products could easily end up in the Israeli market itself.

PNA officials argue that it was a price that the Palestinians had to pay Israel in return for the Jewish state's agreement to accept the establishment of a Palestinian monetary authority and currency.

Paediatricians to hold conference

AMMAN (Petra) — A three-day international Arab paediatric conference will be held at the University of Jordan's Prince Hassan auditorium, under Royal patronage, starting with April 12.

The conference will discuss several working papers covering such topics as newborns, pneumonia deliveries and communicable and contagious diseases, according to Abdul Karim Al Qudah, president of the Jordanian Paediatric Association (JPA) which is organising the conference.

Dr. Qudah said 1,000 paediatricians and professors of paediatrics from 21 Arab and foreign countries will attend the meeting.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Qudah said several specialised scientific symposia will be held, in addition to a lecture on the evolution and development of health services to children in Jordan.

A specialised symposium on children's rights, and child abuse will also be held, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the University of Jordan, Dr. Qudah said.

He added that a medical exhibition will also be held on the sideline of the conference, noting that major local, Arab and international companies dealing with medical equipment will take part in the exhibition.

Swaqa prison to skill- train more inmates, expand scope of operations

AMMAN (Petra) — The workshops at Swaqa prison, south of Amman, are planning to expand their operations and increase the number of inmates wishing to learn a trade and do productive work, according to prison director, Colonel Hassan Smadi Friday.

He said that the prison operates leather, carpentry and blacksmiths workshops which produce woodwork and metal products like school desks, and metal cupboards, as well as different types of leather products.

The move to expand comes in light of the Council of Ministers' instructions to government departments to order their needs of wood and metal products from the prison whenever this is possible, said Col. Smadi.

He said that the Ministry of Education has given its consent to buying at least 30 per cent of its requirements for school rooms from the prison's workshops.

According to Col. Smadi, the prison workshops also include a laundry which can cater to the needs of large numbers of hotels and other organisations since it starts to fully operate. At present the laundry is covering the needs of the nearby community colleges, added Col. Smadi.

He said that the prison is operating a livestock project, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, and large areas of land have been reclaimed and planted with fruit trees and animal feed.

The prison administration, they said, have worked out plans for improving the sanitary services, sports facilities and vocational workshops during 1995.

They added that plans are under way for creating another vocational training centre at Yajouz and for transforming the centre in Jweid to serve women prisoners only.



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THE AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR TRADE
THE HONOURABLE SENATOR
Bob McMullan

and the delegates of the

AUSTRALIAN - JORDANIAN TRADE COMMITTEE

visiting Jordan on 18 - 19 February



In Jordan since 1925

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

- PLAYS**
- ★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.
- EXHIBITIONS**
- ★ Exhibition of handicrafts by Hasmig Kuyumjian at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - ★ Photo exhibition at the Friends of Archaeology Center.
 - ★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Center.
 - ★ Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.
 - ★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - ★ Exhibition of the works of Lebanese artist Amin Al Basha at Darat Al Funun. Also showing works by contemporary Arab artists.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Livestock market to open in Madaba
 MADABA (Petra) — The Madaba Municipality has finalised work on a site which will serve as the city's new livestock market. Madaba Deputy Mayor Maddallah Al Tarawneh said the municipality's machineries have worked on preparing the 15-dunum market. The municipality, Mr. Tarawneh said, has allocated a parking area for trucks transporting livestock to avoid traffic jams near the site.

Mayor to study dealers' cases
 AMMAN (Petra) — Greater Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi Friday discussed with construction cement and iron dealers in Tla'a Al Ali, Khaldia and Umm Al Summaq areas, on the outskirts of Amman, the new regulations issued by the municipality. The regulations ban dealers from trading in cement and iron in the above areas in view of the hazards they cause to the environment. Dr. Abbadi noted that the new regulations were issued in response to complaints by residents of these areas. The regulations provide that such construction materials should be stored in special warehouses. Following a lengthy discussion, the mayor promised to study each case separately and find proper solutions for them.

Diving courses organised in Aqaba
 AQABA (Petra) — The Royal Diving Club in Aqaba is currently organising two diving courses for 18 trainees from the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman as well as Jordan.

Mandela pledges war on crime

S. African police block students after protests

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — President Nelson Mandela Friday vowed to fight corruption, crime and racism as he reopened South Africa's parliament, defending his government's record in the wake of strong criticism.

Inaugurating the second session of the first democratically elected parliament, Mr. Mandela also promised an "investor-friendly climate" under continued fiscal discipline.

On Tuesday, Mr. Mandela's own estranged wife Winnie, who has a deputy minister's post, compelled to make a public apology for a scathing attack on the government, which she had accused in a speech of failing to tackle racism in the workplace.

The administration has also come under fire in some quarters for alleged pampering to the white minority in its bid for national reconciliation and failing to address black majority needs.

While not directly addressing critics, Mr. Mandela acknowledged that the government, which took office after the first all-race elections in April 1994, had made mistakes, but said this was "an inevitable element in the process of learning."

"It is always the case that the spectators are better than the players on the field," he said.

"Whatever the teething problems," Mr. Mandela said, the government of national unity "has succeeded in its intentions of

ensuring cooperation among our people as a whole."

In a speech critical of habits acquired both by whites and blacks under apartheid, Mr. Mandela warned against racism, violence and disruption as a means of achieving political ends.

"The battle against the forces of anarchy and chaos has been joined," he said. "Let no one say they have not been warned."

Addressing "those who have... misread freedom to mean license," Mr. Mandela said: "Let me... make this abundantly clear that the small minority in our midst which wears the mask of anarchy will meet its match in the government."

"We are not afraid of struggle. We are, after all, a product of confrontation and struggle."

The rising crime rate "cannot be tolerated," he declared. "We must take the war to the criminals and no longer allow the situation in which are mere sitting ducks."

He called for community support of law enforcement agencies, reiterating a promise that the government "has no intention to conduct a witchhunt against the police" for offences committed under apartheid.

Racism was still a scourge, Mr. Mandela said, referring as a latest example to the riots at Ruyterwacht near where whites demonstrated violently to prevent the housing of black children to a formerly white school.

"Those who are responsible for these crimes of racism must be brought to book without delay," he said. "It is clear that insufficient progress has been made... to deal with this cancer."

"The situation cannot be allowed in which anyone acts in a manner which perpetuates the practice of apartheid."

Corruption — an issue that has gained prominence with recent accusations against African National Congress veterans Allan Boesak and Winnie Mandela — is a legacy of apartheid that "has deeply infected the fibre of our society," Mr. Mandela said.

But he stressed that it should be fought in a fair and just manner.

"At all times we must guarantee the right of the accused to be heard, without making any concession to the primeval instinct to pillory and burn people at the stake," he said.

"We need to educators with the regard to the matter of rooting out corruption, which we will deal with firmly and unequivocally, whoever may be involved," he said.

Mr. Mandela warned that the government "has extremely limited resources to address the many and urgent needs of our people."

"All of us... must rid ourselves of the wrong notion that the government has a big bag full of money," he said. "The government does not have such riches."

"There are signs that our

economy is beginning to pick up," he said, vowing to seek "sustained and high levels of economic growth... (and) in particular to ensure the creation of an investor friendly climate."

"I would... like to emphasize our continuing commitment to fiscal discipline," Mr. Mandela said.

President Mandela, reaffirming the new South Africa's place in the family of nations, Friday pledged particular attention to his country's relations with its southern African neighbours.

In the foreign policy segment of his state of the nation address, Mr. Mandela said he was "inspired by the reality of progressive developments in our region."

He cited the elections in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia, the restoration of democracy in Lesotho with the reinstatement of King Moshoeshoe II and the signing of the Anglia peace agreement.

"All this augurs well for the future of our people," he said.

Mr. Mandela warned, however, against "tensions that are building up with regard to population movements within our region."

"We must treat this matter with all due sensitivity, conscious of the history of our region, including the destruction caused by the policy of aggression and destabilisation" of South Africa's previous apartheid regime, he said.

The U.N. Social Summit next month and the Interna-



A woman pleads with bystanders after she was mugged and robbed of her glasses and other belongings during a protest by 10,000 schoolchildren in Cape Town city centre Thursday. The protesting pupils blocked to government

offices to demand places in schools formerly reserved for whites. The protest came as whites in the working class suburb of Ruyterwacht said they would not allow black pupils to use the vacant school in their area (AFP photo)

"In all our actions," Mr. Mandela said, "we must move from the position that the fundamental objective we must pursue is friendship, cooperation and solidarity among the peoples of our region."

He reiterated South Africa's "willingness to contribute whatever we can" to establish peace and democracy in Angola.

South Africa seeks an active part in the debate on "the new world order, focusing in particular on such matters as a democratic international political order, universal prosperity, peace and stability — all of which are questions of great relevance to our own continent of Africa," he said.

The U.N. Social Summit next month and the Interna-

tional Women's Conference in Beijing later in the year will be crucial for in which we should make our own humble contribution to the effort to create a better world," he said.

Meanwhile, armed police prevented hundreds of black children from leaving a South African township Friday, following days of racial incidents between angry whites and thousands of blacks being bused to a suburban Cape Town school.

Four buses carrying children were stopped by police on a main motorway into Cape Town where several people were mugged and fruit-stalls trashed by protesting children Thursday.

Some of the children trying to get to the city were from among thousands who earlier this week occupied an empty

school in the mainly-white working-class Ruyterwacht suburb.

The provincial government Thursday closed the school saying it was a health risk. Provincial Education Minister Marsha Ockers said black students had caused extensive damage to the school, breaking toilets, wash basins and water pipes.

Pupils and teachers, prevented from going to Cape Town, told reporters they were determined to get to the city.

"We are marching to Guguletu where we will get on the trains and go to town," a student said.

At Ruyterwacht, 15 kilometres away, whites armed with clubs, chains and whips were out in force in case the black students returned to the school.

French writer accused in cocaine trial

PARIS (AFP) — French writer Francoise Sagan faces a possible 18-month suspended jail sentence and a 500,000 franc (\$9,300) fine on charges of possessing and handling cocaine. Prosecutor Bernard Fos called for the writer, who has been on trial since Feb. 1 along with 25 other defendants, to receive the sentences in connection with the offences, which allegedly occurred in 1992. Sagan, who appeared in court Wednesday for the first time since the trial began, said she does not currently use cocaine, but that at the time of the alleged offences it "helped her" following a number of bereavements. The writer defended her right to use drugs. "Every human being is free if his or her freedom does not affect that of others," she told the court. "Laws are made to be adopted to people and not the other way round."

Sagan was given a six-month suspended sentence and a 100,000 franc (\$1,800) fine for a similar offence in March 1993 in Lyon. The Paris prosecutor urged penalties ranging from three months suspended to seven years for the other defendants involved in the case, who allegedly range from casual users to full-time traffickers.

Vanessa Paradis arrested for drugs possession

MONTREAL (R) — French singer and actress Vanessa Paradis was arrested at Montreal's Dorval Airport and charged with possession of hashish, the Canadian Press (CP) news agency reported.

U.S. custom officers say they found about three grammes (0.1 ounces) of hashish in her luggage, according to CP. Paradis was on her way to New York City, it said. She was released after posting a \$500 bond and was ordered to appear in court in Montreal next month. CP said CP quoted reports as saying Paradis then got on a plane to go back home to Paris.

French radio reported Paradis had been in Canada to promote the film *Elisa* with actor Gerard Depardieu.

'God Must Have Forgotten Me'

PARIS (AP) — God Must Have Forgotten Me, Jeanne Calment is fond of saying. France's oldest citizen — and, according to some accounts, the world's — is preparing to celebrate her 120th birthday Tuesday.

"I've had a beautiful life," she said in an interview published Thursday in the newspaper *Le Figaro*. "With good health, one is happy. I'm still as hungry as a wolf. A 120-year-old stomach... what says more?" Mrs. Calment, born in 1875 in the southwestern town of Arles, where she still lives, has outlasted her husband and her brother. Her daughter and grandson also are dead, as she has no direct descendants. But she has wonderful memories, she says. "I'm spoiled, spoiled," she told *Le Figaro*. She remembers travelling to Paris and dining at the restaurant of the Eiffel Tower when it was still under construction.

India's 'Bandit Queen' embraces Buddhism

NAGPUR, India (AFP) — Indian "Bandit Queen" Phoolan Devi, who spent 13 years behind bars for alleged slayings, has converted to Buddhism.

Phoolan Devi, 32, was arrested in 1983 for the slaying of a man. She was sentenced to 13 years in prison. She was released in 1993. She was converted to Buddhism by a Buddhist monk who was a spiritual mentor during her years in prison. Ms. Devi, who is in her early 30s and comes from a low-caste Hindu family, was rebaptized "Buddha Putri" or Buddha daughter while her spouse took the name "Buddha Putra" (Buddha's son). "Buddhism is not a religion. It is a way of life and the path to peace which leads people to the path of social development," the former convict told the crowd after initiation.

The number of tourists entering Jordan from the Jordan Valley Bridge and Wadi Araba was 43,664 during August-January period in Jordan and spent million (Al Aswao

Mexican army to stay in Chiapas

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — The Mexican army will remain in Chiapas despite the Zapatista rebels' demand that troops be withdrawn from the southern state before peace talks can begin, the Interior Ministry said.

The attorney general and the Mexican army "will maintain their presence in Chiapas under any circumstance... to guarantee the local population's security and prevent acts of violence," the ministry said in a statement late Thursday.

President Ernesto Zedillo last week ordered a crackdown against the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) to end their 13-month confrontation in impoverished Chiapas, but called it off on Wednesday inviting the guerrillas to resume peace negotiations.

A Zapatista leader Ana Maria Thursday said: "The EZLN is willing to talk to resolve the conflict," but added that before negotiations could begin Chiapas had to be cleared of federal troops.

Mr. Zedillo also ordered arrest warrants against rebel chief Subcomandante Marcos, and other Zapatista leaders, which Ana Maria also demanded be lifted.

The London-based human rights group Amnesty International said in a statement Thursday that the Mexican military had engaged in torture, arbitrary arrests and

other abuses in trying to put down an indigenous uprising in Chiapas.

"The organisation has confirmed reports that scores of people have been arbitrarily detained and reportedly tortured and ill-treated, in Chiapas, Mexico City and other parts of the country," the human rights group said in a statement.

"Several remain 'disappeared,'" Amnesty said. It called for the Mexican government to protect the human rights of the population and to investigate and punish any violations.

"The army carried out arrests of civilians and effectively prevented free access and transit to journalists, human rights monitors and even an international committee of the Red Cross delegate," Amnesty added.

Earlier Thursday, Reuters reporters said the Mexican army's advance deep into Zapatista guerrilla territory had apparently been achieved without human rights atrocities.

They quoted villagers as saying some beatings and illegal detentions took place, but found no proof of rebel claims that the army tortured civilians or bombed villages in its week-old offensive.

While many pro-guerrilla villages had been turned into ghost towns as their residents fled from the army's advance in the southern state of

Chiapas, reporters who were allowed into the conflict zone found no firm evidence of widespread abuses.

In several small villages that leaders of the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army said had been strafed by army machinegun fire, there were no signs of any such attack.

A U.N. agency Thursday urged Mexico to pull its troops out of Chiapas and stop its campaign against Maya Indian rebels.

The UNESCO conference, which gathers representatives of indigenous people around the world, also urged Peru and Ecuador to stop fighting and settle their jungle dispute.

Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu, herself a Maya Indian from Guatemala, told a news conference these were not Indian conflicts but they were taking place in Indian areas and endangering local populations.

The conference passed a statement drafted by Indian delegates from Ecuador and Peru urging the two countries to declare an indefinite truce. They declared a ceasefire Tuesday in the conflict over their ill-defined border in the remote Cordillera Del Condor in the jungle foothills of the Andes.

The conference also urged the Mexican government to pull its troops out of the southern region of Chiapas

Britain revokes 10 N. Irish exclusion orders

LONDON (Agencies) — Britain said Friday that improved security in Northern Ireland meant it was lifting the last 10 "exclusion orders" which prevented designated individuals travelling freely between the province and mainland Britain.

Britain and Ireland are trying measures to cement peace in Northern Ireland, after ceasefires six months ago ended a 25-year-old civil war that cost 3,200 lives.

In the latest step, Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew said in a statement: "On the basis of security advice... there is no longer a need to maintain those exclusion orders for which I am responsible."

He said Home Secretary Michael Howard was reviewing a separate 56 exclusion orders for which he was responsible and would announce his conclusions later.

Sir Patrick said he hoped the government would be able to do away with special powers it has under an emergency provisions act that allows for controversial, non-jury trials in the British-ruled province.

"The government's hope is that a lasting peace will prove to be established and that the need for the exceptional powers provided by this act will accordingly be removed," he said.

Both governments want to get pro-British Protestant and Irish Catholic blocs to sit down together and agree on a middle-of-the-road package, which would establish strong ties between the British-ruled north and independent south.

"Can you give us one valid reason why we as Ulster Unionists should not question

your integrity and that of... even the prime minister?" Mr. Beggs asked Michael Ancram, a senior British minister in Northern Ireland, as Conservative lawmakers reacted with cries of "shame."

"We feel we have not only been deceived, but we have been betrayed," said Mr. Beggs, considered the most moderate of the nine Ulster Unionist lawmakers in parliament.

The harsh words from Ulster Unionist lawmaker Roy Beggs followed hours after three of his colleagues released a letter to Mr. Major. The letter warned that Northern Ireland's largest party probably would reject British and Irish proposals for a peace settlement if they threatened the province's links with Britain.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said Tuesday that those proposals — intended as the foundation for inter-party talks on Northern Ireland's future — may be published as early as next week.

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Republican dissenters hold fast against missile defence system

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican dissenters held firm against a party commitment to missile defences, giving the majority leadership an unexpected lesson in the limits of its newly gained power.

But Republicans prevailed in cutting U.S. support for United Nations peacekeeping, a move that Secretary of State Warren Christopher Thursday denounced as "a threat to this and every future president's authority to protect the security of the United States."

Moments after the house voted 241 to 181 in favour of a bill setting a Republican tone for U.S. foreign and defence policy, Speaker Newt Gingrich dismissed Wednesday's vote on a national missile defence system as a "man bites dog" interpretation of what happened.

"It is true that having had 145 votes (in the new Congress), we've lost one amendment," he said. "We think overall that's pretty astonishing."

The Republican leadership had planned to revive the missile defence provision Thursday but backed off when it became clear that not enough dissenters would change their votes.

For some of the 24 Republicans who deserted the lead-

ership Wednesday night, the issue was a basic conflict between two goals of the Republicans: "Contract With America" — a national missile defence and a balanced federal budget.

"Budget reality dawned on the 24," said Rep. John M. Spratt Jr., a Democrat, sponsor of the amendment that stripped language that required the Secretary of Defence to bring Congress a plan for deployment of a national ballistic missile defence system.

Embarrassed on that one issue, the Republican majority worked its will on the other portions of the bill. As it passed the House, the measure would cut back on U.S. financial support for U.N. peacekeeping and encourage early admission of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia into NATO.

In addition, it restricts the authority of the president to place U.S. troops under foreign commanders.

Mr. Christopher said he was dismayed by the bill's passage and the "harmful impact it would have on our national security."

"Intentionally or not, the bill would eliminate peacekeeping as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy and... remove an option that every American presi-

dent since Harry Truman has used to advance our interests," he said.

"The Republican leadership that this measure is not the end of their efforts to reshape defence policy."

"This is not this Congress's last word on defence," said majority leader Richard Armey.

"We have appropriations bills coming... There are many ways to make our point," said Mr. Gingrich.

Defence Secretary William Perry said he was profoundly concerned about the provision restricting the placement of U.S. troops under foreign command.

"It would make difficult, if not impossible, coalition warfare," Mr. Perry said. "I'm implacably opposed to this feature."

At the White House, spokesman Mike McCurry said, "it makes little sense to pour billions and billions of dollars into a defence shield that may or may not work."

Earlier, President Bill Clinton told Mr. Gingrich in a letter that the bill was "simply unacceptable."

Neither Mr. Gingrich nor House Republican whip Tom Delay of Texas, would speculate on the prospects of overriding a veto. The measure first must go to the Senate, where its prospects are uncertain.

Major rocked by divisions over Europe, polls

LONDON (R) — British voters and opinion polls underlined the unpopularity of Prime Minister John Major Friday and opposition leader Tony Blair said the Conservative government was paralysed by its splits over Europe.

The Conservative candidate at a parliamentary by-election in south Wales Thursday suffered a humiliating defeat, finishing a poor fourth with less than four per cent of the vote.

An opinion poll for the Guardian newspaper predicted that in a general election the Conservatives would trail 18 percentage points behind the opposition Labour Party.

Labour leader Blair sought to capitalise on Conservative division after a week in which government ministers public-

ly disagreed about a single European currency.

"A fault line runs... through the entirety of the Conservative Party, and if they can't resolve this, then I think you've effectively got paralysis of government policy," Mr. Blair told BBC Radio.

"You have now got many people within the Conservative Party... who are effectively saying that Britain should withdraw from the European Union."

Mr. Blair said Labour had scored a fine victory in winning Thursday's by-election in south Wales.

The seat, a Labour stronghold, fell vacant when the party's former leader Neil Kinnock joined the European Commission.

The Conservatives' share of the vote in Islwyn slumped

to 3.9 per cent from 14.8 per cent at the 1992 general election. It was the third worst Conservative by-election performance since World War II.

Mr. Major told members of his cabinet Thursday they should stick closely to policy in public and not to draw into "speculative debate."

The warning was delivered after Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister) Kenneth Clarke denied in a newspaper interview that a single European currency would threaten Britain's position as a nation state.

That argument put Mr. Clarke at odds with anti-European ministers, including Jonathan Aitken, his number two at the treasury, who said he would hesitate for an eternity before taking Britain into a single currency.

Mr. Clarke's predecessor, Norman Lamont, was expected to pour fuel on the flames with a speech insisting that a single currency would inevitably be a step on the road to a united states of Europe.

In the ICM opinion poll published in the Guardian, Labour had 49 per cent of the national vote against 31 per cent for the Conservatives.

This was after pollsters adjusted raw polling figures in the ruling party's favour to reflect the known reluctance of Conservatives at present to admit they support the party,

Cambodia reports heavy army casualties

PHNOM PENH (R) — The Cambodian government Friday said its army had suffered heavy casualties in a drive against Khmer Rouge guerrillas in the far northern province of Preah Vihear.

Asked the number of casualties, a senior government official with a close knowledge of the fighting replied: "Too much." He added that an exact casualty figure had still not been received in Phnom Penh.

"There are casualties and wounded on both sides, but the main problem is that the Khmer Rouge have laid hundreds and hundreds of mines. There is sporadic

fighting and the problem is the mines," the official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

According to an army report just received from the front two key roads going through Preah Vihear province up to the Thai-Cambodian border were "jeopardised by mines" and many areas in the province were "full of mines," he said.

On Wednesday wounded soldiers evacuated to Phnom Penh said the army had suffered hundreds of casualties in fighting since January, a figure later confirmed by the International Committee for

the Red Cross (ICRC).

The ICRC said Thursday it had given emergency aid to hundreds of Cambodian troops in military hospitals in Phnom Penh and northwest Siem Reap, and more aid distributions were expected next week.

Both hospitals have had a massive influx of casualties and the majority of them are reportedly from the Preah Vihear area," Urs Boegli, head of the ICRC in Cambodia told Reuters.

The Phnom Penh Hospital was treating more than 450 soldiers and at least 180 had been brought from the north since early January. "With

this number of wounded you can expect an equal or larger number of killed," said Mr. Boegli.

Khmer Rouge radio Friday claimed that 400 government soldiers had been killed in the fighting in which 3,000 troops are involved. Another 700 had died from malaria and 1,200 had deserted from the coalition government's forces, they claimed.

Cambodian Co-Defence Minister Tea Chamrath Thursday said the government army planned to lay siege to the ancient 10th century temple in Preah Vihear, located on the Thai-Cambodian border.

business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

CBJ eases pressure

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) cancelled a memorandum it issued last month concerning ceilings on credit facilities. According to the January memorandum, a bank was limited to extend no more than 15 per cent of its capital and legal reserves in direct credit facilities to any unrelated group of borrowers. Indirect credit facilities were limited to 25 per cent to any single borrower and 40 per cent to any unrelated group of borrowers. The CBJ is reportedly preparing an amended memorandum which will include new steps that would be easier and simpler to carry out. These would give a six-month reprieve to traders, industrialists and businessmen to meet the new limits (Al Aswao).

The Tourism Investment Department of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) denied that its hotel at Petra had been sold or that there is any intention to sell it to a foreign company. The corporation is only negotiating with Forum, the company that manages the hotel, to also manage the Petra residence, which is currently under the direct management of the SSC (Al Dustour).

Jordan's Middle East Investment Bank will raise its capital to 10 million dinars (\$14.2 million) in a private placement to allow it to expand banking services. Its general manager has said, "We have finalised measures to raise our capital and it has been agreed to raise it by a private placement with 50 per cent from old shareholders and the rest from new investors." Marwan Awad, general manager of the Middle East Investment Bank, told Reuters. He said the rise in capital to 10 million dinars (\$14



Bosnian government soldiers leave the "Raniz Salcin" barracks in the outskirts of Sarajevo to go to the nearby frontlines. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic

announced yesterday that his forces will smash the government troops if they will launch a new offensive in the Bihac pocket (AFP photo)

Fighting rages in Bihac despite peace efforts

SARAJEVO (R) — Fighting raged around the Muslim enclave of Bihac Friday as the major powers tried to get Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to accept a new peace plan.

United Nations peacekeepers reported heavy shelling to the north of the Bihac enclave of northwest Bosnia Thursday and through the night into Friday.

Several hundred mortar detonations were reported around Velika Kladusa on the Croatian border where Serb-backed Muslim rebels are fighting government troops. Another 35 blasts were heard around Bihac town, the United Nations said.

Fighting in the U.N.-declared safe area threatens a seven-week-old ceasefire intended to lay the ground for negotiations on the latest international peace plan to end the war in Bosnia and settle conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

Bosnian Serb forces surrounding the Muslim government 5th Corps in the area accuse their enemies of breaching the ceasefire with a massive push since mid-January. The Sarajevo government counters that Serbs are shelling their forces.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozirev is due in Belgrade this weekend to present fresh proposals to Mr. Milosevic in return for using his influence over the Bosnian Serbs.

Mr. Kozirev will try to sell

Mr. Milosevic the latest offer from the so-called contact group powers — Russia, the United States, France, Germany and Britain. Under the plan Belgrade would get relief from sanctions crippling rump Yugoslavia's economy in return for recognising Bosnia and Croatia.

"Everyone, not only us, now sees he (Milosevic) is a key figure who favours a settlement," Mr. Kozirev said in Moscow after talks with international mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, who were in Belgrade Wednesday.

"An intensive dialogue is under way. Every party is making a contribution. As far as I can say, we are moving closer to each other," said Mr. Kozirev, who has argued, against Washington, that Mr. Milosevic must be helped if a peace deal is to take hold.

Under the contact group plan Bosnia would be divided into roughly equal parts between the Bosnian Serb side and a Muslim-Croat federation. Croatia would be recognised within its pre-war borders, including the 30 per cent of its territory, the Krajina, now held by Croatian Serbs.

Accepting such a deal would compel Mr. Milosevic to surrender the nationalist goal of a greater Serbia and leave him open to charges of abandoning ethnic Serbs to Muslim domination in Bosnia and Catholic domination in Croatia.

"Milosevic could lose elec-

tions over this," Mihajlo Markovic, second in command of the ruling Socialist Party, told Reuters. "Many Serbians would not like it. It would reduce the Serbs (in Krajina and Bosnia) to an endangered minority."

It is also not clear how much leverage the international community has over Mr. Milosevic.

Sanctions are damaging heavy industry but life in Belgrade goes on much as usual. The shops are full of smuggled western goods and petrol is available on any street corner — bought by the bottle from smugglers.

"He (Milosevic) is already criticised for making concessions without much benefit," Mr. Markovic said.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, already isolated by his former ally Mr. Milosevic, is in no mood to compromise or talk peace.

He has no intention of embracing the contact group plan which would force his troops to surrender a large chunk of the 70 per cent of Bosnia they have won in three years of bloody battle against the Muslim forces.

"If the international community wants war, there will be war. If it wants peace then it will make peace, but not at our expense," Mr. Karadzic said Thursday.

Meanwhile a U.N. military spokesman said in Sarajevo Friday, food shortages in Bihac are serious, but no one has yet starved to death in the northwest Bosnian pocket

and reports of a famine there are inaccurate.

Major Herve Gourmelon, of the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR), said the situation in the UN-patrolled enclave was "not as dramatic or desperate" as some reports had suggested, adding that "one can speak of malnutrition but not of famine" there.

His comments, based on "reliable" information from U.N. peacekeepers, came a day after the Geneva-based office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the pocket's population — estimated at around 200,000 — remained on the verge of a disastrous famine.

And in Rome Thursday, the World Food Programme (WFP), the U.N. organisation in charge of food distribution, warned that 10 to 20 per cent of the enclave's population risked starvation.

Maj. Gourmelon said the four-month Bosnia-wide ceasefire between Bosnian Serb and government forces that came into effect on Jan. 1 had been repeatedly violated in Bihac, and life was difficult for the enclave's most vulnerable inhabitants.

But "when things become critical the (secessionist) Serbs let an (aid) convoy through," he said.

A 96-tonne UNHCR convoy was unloaded Thursday in Cazin in the south of the enclave, while Bangladesh peacekeepers in the enclave distributed an additional 15 tonnes of food, he said.

Socialist leader to face trial

French conservatives move closer to all-out presidency war

PARIS (R) — France's rival conservatives moved closer to all-out war in the presidential election campaign Friday, trading accusations of sabotage and incompetence as polls showed a sharp drop in support for Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.

Former Centrist President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing made a stinging attack on Mr. Balladur, the frontrunner for the April-May election, accusing him of weakness and seeking to please rather than govern.

Mr. Balladur and his supporters, worried by the slump in his standing in opinion polls, trained their guns on rivals splitting the conservative vote and accused them of running the suicidal risk of helping the opposition Socialists.

Three surveys this week said Mr. Balladur's lead over Socialist Lionel Jospin for the April 23 first round was narrowing, although they forecast he would easily win the May 7 run-off.

"Edouard Balladur, you must choose: Rule or please?" Mr. Giscard d'Estaing wrote in the leftist daily Liberation. "I have not seen any strong government action in what you have presented."

He said Mr. Balladur's presidential platform, unveiled this week, fell short of the drastic steps needed to curb a budget deficit and near-record 12.6 per cent unemployment.

The French people do not like those who follow rather than lead them... personally I do not intend to go into the year 2000 asleep," Mr. Giscard d'Estaing said, recovering his past presidential tone. He lost his presidency in 1981 to Socialist Francois Mitterrand.

His comments could hint at a rival presidential bid, either his own or that of centrist ex-Prime Minister Raymond Barre who is expected to announce his intentions next



French Prime Minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur waves at supporters as leaflets float around him during a campaign rally in the eastern Paris suburb of Nogent-sur-Marne. Budget Minister and spokesman of the candidate Nicolas Sarkozy (right) and Health Minister Simone Veil (2nd right) also attended the meeting (AFP photo)

week. Mr. Balladur, in his first campaign rally Thursday night, accused rivals of paving the way to a victory for the left. "There are some specialists... who know how to cause defeat," he said.

His barbs, mostly directed at fellow-Gaullist presidential candidate Jacques Chirac, were also a clear warning to potential centrist contenders to stay out of the fight.

His senior supporters unleashed a barrage in all directions. Defence Minister Francois Leotard called on Mr. Chirac to stop suicidal attacks on Mr. Balladur and Social Affairs Minister Simone Veil warned fellow-centrists against joining the election fray.

"I find it saddening that the (centre-right) majority's first casualties in 1981 and 1983 are contributing to the division," Ms. Veil said. "Mr. Mitterrand beat Mr. Chirac and Mr. Barre in 1988."

"We are definitely, irremediably, incurably the world's most stupid right?" Interior Minister Charles

Pasqua asked. "Are we to offer our opponents much longer the show of our divisions?"

Mr. Chirac, who has ruled out withdrawing despite trailing third in opinion polls, was preparing to fire back in a major campaign speech later Friday.

The left faced problems of its own. The Radical Group said it had not won requested concessions from the Socialists and might field its leader Jean-Francois Hory as a rival of Mr. Jospin.

In another setback for the Socialist Party, a court ordered its leader Henri Emmanuelli to stand trial on suspicion of illicit party funding when he was treasurer.

Mr. Emmanuelli, who lost the party's presidential nomination to Mr. Jospin, is already due to go to trial next month in a related political corruption case.

The right is also troubled by corruption probes. A court Friday rejected an appeal for the release of Gaullist former Communica-

tion Minister Alain Carignon who has been held for nearly five months in a graft inquiry.

Judicial sources said the court ordered Mr. Emmanuelli and another former Socialist Party treasurer, Andre Laignel, to stand trial on suspicion of illicit party funding. It said they had not personally enriched themselves but that they could not be ignorant of the way the party was funded.

State prosecutors had asked for the case to be dismissed for lack of evidence. Both Mr. Emmanuelli and Mr. Laignel, placed under investigation in 1993, have denied the accusations.

Mr. Emmanuelli's lawyers appealed against the ruling, saying that the court had previously dismissed similar cases involving government ministers.

The probe centres on allegations that a consultancy firm accepted donations on behalf of the party from "building companies in exchange of preference in public works tenders in the Mediterranean port city of Marseille."

Ecuador, Peru sign ceasefire agreement

BRASILIA (AFP) — Ecuador and Peru signed a ceasefire agreement here early Friday that calls for international observers to monitor a border area both countries have been fighting over since Jan. 26.

After consulting their governments, Deputy Foreign Ministers Eduardo Ponce, of Peru, and Marcelo Fernandez de Cordoba, of Ecuador, signed the agreement at 0450 GMT at the Brazilian Foreign Ministry at Itamarati Palace, the official statement said.

The agreement was drawn up earlier this week by Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States, all guarantors of a 1942 border treaty that failed to demarcate a 78-kilometre (48-mile) area in the Andes' Condor range.

An observer mission made up of military officials from the four guarantor countries will head to the disputed border area within 48 hours, Brazilian Deputy Foreign Minister Sebastiao du Rego Barros said.

The observer mission will last 90 days but can be extended if needed, the agreement said.

The signing of the Trinary Peace Declaration was preceded by an announcement in Lima by Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori that he found the agreement generally "acceptable."

In a joint statement, the guarantor countries said they welcomed the peace accord, stressing that, in Quito and Lima had also agreed to bilateral negotiations to find a lasting solution to their border dispute.

Ecuador in 1960 unilaterally rejected the 1942 Rio Protocol that ended a war between the two countries.



In this photo released by the Peruvian government, President Alberto Fujimori (left) poses with soldiers in the Cenepe River at the border with Ecuador (AFP photo)

Under the Rio accord, Quito lost almost half its territory and its direct access to the Amazon River, a grievance it has nurtured over the decades.

Mr. Fernandez de Cordoba said negotiations to set the border in the disputed area would follow the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

The agreement calls for a demilitarised zone in the disputed border zone and a gradual demobilisation of military troops from both countries in all nearby areas.

The observer mission, which Argentinian Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella said Thursday in Buenos Aires would include 10 military and civilian officials from each guarantor country, will set up headquarters in the areas of greatest friction, such as the border posts of Tintinza and Base Sur, the accord said.

A tentative truce had been in place since Tuesday after Mr. Fujimori declared a unilateral ceasefire and Ecuadorian said its troops would only respond if fired upon.

At least 70 Peruvian and Ecuadorian soldiers have been killed since the border war began.

On Thursday, Ecuadorian President Sixto Duran Ballen said in Quito that clashes continued in the border conflict despite the truce and challenged Lima to accept the four-nation peace plan immediately.

Mr. Fujimori late Thursday said the peace proposal in Brasilia was "acceptable," adding that his government agreed with three key provisions in it and that only "small modifications" were needed. He did not elaborate.

Back in Lima after a two-day visit to the disputed border area in the Andes' Con-

dor range, Mr. Fujimori told reporters that the four-nation proposal meant a total ceasefire was in effect in the three-week conflict.

As peace talks advanced in Brasilia, Peru Thursday released 20 Ecuadorian civilians it had captured since the fighting began, while Ecuador freed 21 Peruvians.

Mr. Fujimori Thursday backedtracked on an earlier boast that Peruvian forces had driven all Ecuadorian troops out of what he claimed was Peruvian territory, recapturing from Ecuador posts including Tintinza.

On Tuesday, reporters and Red Cross representatives toured Tintinza and said it was still in Ecuadorian hands.

Both countries insisted the other started the latest round of fighting in the unmarked stretch of border at the headquarters of the Cenepe River.

India to fence off Kashmir border with Pakistan

JAMMU, India (AFP) — India plans to fence off parts of its border with Pakistan in the northern state of Kashmir to prevent cross-border arms smuggling by Muslim militants, officials said here Friday.

Engineers will also install floodlights along the zone to help Indian security forces patrol the border in Kashmir, the officials said.

They did not say when the operation would begin, but added that almost 200 kilometres (120 miles) of border territory between the Akhnoor and Pahalpur sectors would be fenced off at a cost of \$100 million.

The sources said a survey showed that cross-border smuggling of weapons by the

rebels was continuing into Indian-held Kashmir, adding that without fencing off the region it would not be possible to close the "loopholes."

Indian security forces have also agreed to increase the number of their frontier posts from the 60 at present to 150, the official sources said here.

A line of control stretching 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) demarcates the zones of divided Kashmir, heavily guarded by tens of thousands of troops from both countries on either side of the frontier.

New Delhi, which administers the southern two-thirds of Kashmir, accuses Islamabad of training and arming Muslim guerrillas in the

Pakistani zone of the Himalayan province.

Pakistan denies the charge, saying it only extends moral and diplomatic support to the Muslim secessionist drive, which has left more than 10,000 people dead since 1989 when the rebellion gained momentum.

India fenced off parts of its 850-kilometre (510-mile) border with Pakistan in Punjab when Sikh separatists reached its peak in the northern state in the late 1980s.

Meanwhile eight Muslim rebels from the powerful pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen group were killed near an Islamic shrine during a gun-battle with Indian troops Friday, a Hizb press statement

said here.

Two militant leaders were among the eight killed near the mausoleum of Charsharif, some 37 kilometres (23 miles) from the Srinagare, it said, adding that an unspecified number of security forces had died in the firefight.

Meanwhile, five militants were among seven people killed in overnight secessionist-linked violence across the troubled state, the Press Trust of India said Friday.

More than 10,000 people have died in Kashmir since 1989 when Muslim militants stepped up their campaign against Indian rule. India accuses Pakistan of fomenting militancy in Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state, but Islamabad denies the charge.

N. Korea warns U.S. again

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — In tit-for-tat diplomacy, North Korea warned Friday it is ready to scrap a nuclear deal if Washington continues to try to impose "unjustifiable preconditions."

The warning, in a report by the North's Communist Party organ Rodong Sinmun, indicated the Communist government has no intention of changing its intransigence on the nuclear deal, although U.S. and South Korean officials say this may be a bargaining ploy.

The report said implementation of the accord will only occur on a step-by-step basis, with Washington talking the first step. It also rejected dialogue with South Korea as a precondition.

"As we declared more than once it is our firm position that if the U.S. does a thing, we will do a thing and if the U.S. does two things, we will do the same," the paper said in a commentary.

"We have never made an empty talk. We mean what we say," said the commentary, carried by the North's official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA).

North Korea is unhappy with a U.S. plan to provide it with South Korean-made reactors under the Oct. 21

nuclear deal aimed at opening up the North's nuclear programme, suspected of nuclear weapons production. The North cited safety problems for rejecting South Korean-made reactors, but analysts believe the real reason is national pride.

Early this week, the North, in its strongest language yet, threatened to pull out of the nuclear deal if the United States insists on giving it South Korean reactors.

North Korea reportedly prefers a Russian or German model, although analysts say it might be possible to use the South Korean model if it's provided through an intermediary.

"There is no doubt that if the issue of the type of LWRs (light-water reactors) is resolved, other matters will be solved smoothly," Rodong Sinmun said.

Washington maintains the South Korean model is the only viable option for financial reasons. South Korea says it will pay for most of the reactors' \$4 billion costs, but only if its model is adopted.

Another hitch is a U.S. demand that the North open dialogue with its southern capitalist rival, as part of the nuclear deal.

Spain in fresh political turmoil with new arrest

MADRID (R) — Spain faced fresh political turmoil Friday after a former top security official was remanded in jail on charges of involvement in a secret war against separatist Basque guerrillas in the 1980s.

Rafael Vera, secretary of state for security in the Interior Ministry for 11 years, was sent to prison without bail by investigating Judge Baltasar Garzon after four-and-a-half hours of questioning Thursday night.

Mr. Vera is the most senior former official named in the investigation into the anti-terrorist liberation group (GAL), which operated on the fringes of Spain's security forces.

The probe shook Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez's minority Socialist government and Spain's financial markets late last year and in the first weeks of this year. GAL killed 27 alleged Basque separatists in southern France between 1983 and 1987.

Before Mr. Vera, four ex-policemen and security officials, including Mr. Vera's personal secretary, had already been remanded in

custody since Judge Garzon reopened the case last December on the basis of fresh evidence from two former Basque region policemen, themselves convicted of GAL crimes in 1991.

The political crisis triggered by the case saw financial markets and the peseta nosedive and brought repeated opposition calls for an early general election, but it appeared to have calmed in the past two or three weeks.

Financial markets rebounded on the back of general economic optimism and Mr. Gonzalez emerged a clear points winner from a bruising contest with conservative Popular Party (PP) leader Jose Maria Aznar in last week's state of the nation debate in parliament.

But news of Mr. Vera's arrest, although widely expected, added fuel to the smouldering fire.

PP spokesman Rodrigo Rato kept to the attack, terming the jailing of the ex-security boss "a qualitative jump" in the level of suspected official involvement in GAL.

Japan marks month since quake with relief budget

KOBE, Japan (R) — Japan Friday took the first step in meeting the daunting cost of reconstruction after last month's devastating Kobe earthquake by hammering out a special budget for disaster relief.

Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama's cabinet endorsed the outline of a supplementary budget totalling 1.02 trillion yen (\$10.2 billion) to finance initial reconstruction costs.

The government estimated Thursday that rebuilding the earthquake-hit areas of central Japan would cost at least 9.6 trillion yen (\$96 billion). Mr. Murayama has been

severely criticised for the central government's slow response and failure to contain damage from the earthquake.

Clearly anxious to dispel that impression, the budget outline was unveiled a week before the budget bills would be formally submitted to parliament.

A Finance Ministry official told reporters the government wanted to "relieve victims by letting them know how things are proceeding with reconstruction measures."

Earlier, parliament approved Mr. Murayama's first concrete measure since the disaster, a package of

bills to cancel or cut income taxes and other levies for those who have lost members of their families or homes.

At noon Friday, exactly one month since the killer earthquake razed the port city of Kobe, tens of thousands of people observed a minute of silence.

As bells tolled atop the Hyogo Prefectural Hall in Kobe, workers at reconstruction sites, refugees at evacuation centres and people on the streets stopped and bowed their heads.

Police Friday said at least 5,391 people were confirmed killed by the 7.2 Richter ear-

quake, which struck at dawn on Jan. 17. Two people were still officially listed as missing.

It was Japan's worst natural disaster since the 1923 great Kanto earthquake, which killed 140,000 in Tokyo and Yokohama.

"We have just lost too much," Hyogo Governor Toshitomi Kaibara told a news conference. "I vow to keep stressing the importance of disaster prevention."

"I pray for the souls of all the precious lives that were lost and will now offer a minute's silence, together with everyone," Mr. Kaibara said before starting the rite.

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Way out of logjam

THE EGYPTIAN-sponsored draft treaty to ban all mass destruction weapons in the Middle East, including Iran, was tailored specially to meet Israel's transparent objection to ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and open the door for a comprehensive Arab endorsement of the proposal to extend the treaty indefinitely. The Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, has repeatedly declared that his country will never renounce its military nuclear capability because of the Iranian and Iraqi nuclear potentials.

The extension of the NPT is up for consideration in April, but some Arab states, notably Egypt and Syria, have vowed not to put their seal of approval on any such extension without Israel's joining the countries already committed to this goal.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid has naturally picked up the Egyptian initiative and made it his own. But what seemed at the outset to be an Arab unifying stance on the NPT ended up becoming a major dividing policy when a meeting of experts of the Cairo-based Arab League failed Wednesday to recommend the endorsement of Cairo's position to the upcoming Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting in the Egyptian capital next month.

We believe that the idea of drafting a Middle East regional treaty banning all mass destruction weapons, including nuclear, biological and chemical arsenals, is supportable but may prove to be unworkable for an obvious reason: Israel's rejection of the NPT stems not only from its anxieties about other countries in the area developing or acquiring mass destruction bombs but also because it fears the long-term Arab might and its numerical edge. Given this reality and the fact that there is no way that Cairo and other Arab capitals with known nuclear know-how would ever accept to be bound by a treaty that does not bind Israel as well, the parties in this region of the world should look elsewhere for ideas to end this standoff than just to the proposed Middle East treaty outlawing all mass destruction weapons.

One way out is to keep at least Egypt, and maybe also other countries non-committal on the NPT and its extension for as long as necessary or basically until the Middle East becomes blessed with a truly comprehensive and just peace that would eliminate the option of war as a method to solve conflicts.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ON THE first anniversary of the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, Arabs and Jews clashed in Hebron, and they are bound to continue clashing as long as they meet and as long as the Israelis occupy Arab land, said Al Ra'i daily. The Jewish settlers, in defiance of Arab feelings and in disregard to their religious sites, are continually provoking the Arabs and, with the help of the Israeli army, are desecrating Muslim shrines, said the paper. The paper said that the Palestinians, who offered so many sacrifices and many martyrs for the sake of securing freedom and ending the Israeli occupation, are ready to continue the struggle, and this was their message to the world and to the Israeli leadership on the first anniversary of the massacre. As long as Israel continues to delay the implementation of its agreements with the Palestinian leadership, the Palestinian lands are bound to witness further acts of violence and bloodshed, continued the daily. It said that the way for preventing friction is a total separation between Arabs and Jews and an end to Jewish settlement programmes on Arab land.

IBRAHIM ZAROUR, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that Israel is the only Middle Eastern state that possesses nuclear weapons in addition to the other mass destruction weapons. Had it not been for America's continued economic, financial and other kinds of help, the Jewish state could never have possessed this horrible arsenal, which the Zionists use to threaten the Arab Nation, said the writer. It is natural then for the Arabs to feel insecure and for Egypt to demand that Israel sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and open its nuclear installations to international inspection, said the writer. Washington is trying to belittle the concern raised by Cairo over this issue and is claiming that the Cairo-Tel Aviv dispute is a matter of difference of opinion, which the two sides would soon overcome, he added. But, he said, Egypt realises too well the grave danger inherent in Israel's arsenal and is determined to spearhead Arab efforts to see that the Israeli nuclear power is checked.

Jordanian Perspective

Something 'entirely wrong' with peace process

By Dr. Musa Kellani

THE ISRAELI decision to "ease" its siege of the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip was probably only a tangible outcome to Thursday's summit between Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. But if that is touted as a breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, then there is something seriously wrong in the entire process.

For one thing, the very essence of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles signed in September 1993 is the concept of negotiations to determine the future status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But it has been made abundantly clear since then that the Israeli perception of those "negotiations" is based on pressuring the Palestinians in all ways possible and force them to succumb to whatever Israeli dictates in terms of final status.

The Israeli cutoff of gasoline to the Gaza Strip for several days last week and Israel's denial to allow fuel supplies to the Strip from Jordan or from Egypt were the best examples of this mentality.

In any case, given the situation as it is today on the Palestinian ground, one would have expected Arafat and Rabin to agree to bring forward the "final status" negotiations. That would then have been a major breakthrough. But then, the Israeli posture of "full commitment" to the terms of the Declaration of Principles would not have allowed that to happen.

What concerns us in Jordan most is the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories.

Arafat and Rabin could meet every day or every hour but if those meetings do not produce tangible results in terms of the living conditions of the Palestinian people, then there is little sense in pinning hopes that the peace process, at the direction and pace it is going now, would produce a just solution and bring about an end to the decades-old conflict in the region.

From our vantage point the main component in the stalemate in the Israel-PLO track is Rabin's political inability to offer the peace process the right momentum and push that it requires. Rabin is tied down by the political consideration that he could not offer any "concessions" to the Palestinians because such a move would seriously undermine his standing with the electorate and destroy his political future.

We do understand the political requirements of Rabin to continue in power for some time more if only because of the certainty the situation could only get worse in the event of his Labour Party's rival, Likud, and its leader Benjamin Netanyahu, scoring success in their campaign to topple him and call early elections. But what we do not understand is why the fate of an entire people who have suffered for so many decades simply because that suffering suited the world powers be tied to an individual's or party's political future.

The crackdown that Arafat has been forced to order against his own people to appease the Israelis is the best example yet of this Israeli "prerequisite". But what is being

eroded in the bargain is the political standing of Arafat and the PLO to the detriment of the chances of success of the peace process. This basic contradiction does not seem to be understood or appreciated by Israel, which, given its way, would definitely like to have the PLO chairman assuming the role of Antoine Lahd in the Gaza Strip and acting as a policeman for his own people rather than the leaders of an independent people who yearn for a life in freedom and dignity.

All said and done, it is very clear that there is no magic solution to the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian track except of course an immediate Israeli move to withdraw entirely to the pre-1967 lines with no exception, leaving the Palestinians to handle their own affairs. Israel will have to take the "painful" decision to evacuate the Jewish settlements in the West Bank regardless of the political price that Labour would have to pay for such a move.

Of course, there cannot be an overnight move along those lines. It needs careful planning and approach, but the process has to start sooner than later if Israel wants to put an end to the cycle of violence and extremism that is threatening to undermine everything that has been achieved in the peace process so far. That would mean Israel ought to drop its demands on how the Palestinians should run their affairs and bring forward the final status negotiations. That might be in contradiction of the Declaration of Principles, but then will that be the first time the declaration has been contradicted by the Israelis?



Arabs should have a unified stand against Israel's nuclear threat

By Elia Nasrallah

THE LOCAL Arabic dailies last week discussed Israel's nuclear capabilities and their threat to the Arab Nation, the deadlock in the Middle East peace process in the Israeli-Palestine track and a host of domestic affairs.

In discussing Israel's nuclear power, a columnist in Al Dustour daily said that the current Arab efforts to force Israel to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is not only an Egyptian undertaking but rather a pan-Arab endeavour to ensure pan-Arab security. The Arab countries are due to discuss the issue at the Arab League level in the coming month and it is then that they will show whether they are united on this issue or whether they are in disarray in the face of Israel's threats, said Taher Al Adwan. The writer said that the United States, which continually supports the Israeli stand, was bound to exercise pressure on the Arabs to accept a compromise settlement which would not end the Israeli threat to the Arabs.

He said that the Arabs should not accept a kind of peace imposed by the threat of nuclear weapons.

Muhammad Kharrouh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, voiced his regret that the Arab countries have not yet reached a consensus on how to deal with the Israeli nuclear threat, largely due to inter-Arab differences. Israel does not want to open its nuclear installation to international inspection and it pursues efforts to build its nuclear arsenal, said the writer. Israel's refusal to sign the NPT, said the writer, gives rise to Arab fears that the Jewish state is determined to impose a settlement on the Arab Nation through the power of nuclear weapons and with backing from the United States. It is regrettable, said the writer, that the Arabs remain in disarray in the face of the common threat that is posed to their present and

future.

Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, criticised the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher for demanding that the Arabs and not Israel should sign the NPT in April. The writer said that the United States, which is keen on protecting the Jewish state, does not care whether the Israelis threaten the Arabs with nuclear weapons or not as long as Tel Aviv possess the means to protect itself.

Sultan Al Hartab, a columnist in Al Ra'i, called on the Arab masses to protest against Israel's continued acts of repression on the Palestinian people. The writer said that protests can be made through the Israeli embassies in Amman and Cairo and can be presented at the official and popular levels. We should not bury our heads in the sand and pretend that nothing is happening in Israeli-held Arab lands, where our kinsmen are facing untold suffer-

ing in Al Dustour that negotiations with the Israelis do not help to secure the withdrawal of occupation forces from Arab lands if they are not backed by resistance activities. The writer said that Israel does not wish to withdraw from Arab land and vice versa would not force it to pull out its forces. He said that the Palestine National Authority (PNA) should use the resistance and encourage resistance activity as a way for forcing Israel to accept and comply with the requirements of peace.

Muhammad Mahasneh, a writer in Al Dustour, commented on the Arab-Israeli-American meeting in Washington, saying the meeting was a failure because it could not force the Israelis to comply with the peace requirements. The Palestinian-Israeli track has been derailed due to Israel's fears of the self-rule, which is bound to extend to other Palestinian lands and deprive the Jew-

lished the names of those responsible for the firms' failure, and had them account for their actions. Since members of the board of directors receive payment in return for their efforts when their companies achieve success, he added, these board members ought to be made to account for their actions in case of failure.

In discussing the carnage on the roads as a result of road accidents, Muhammad Kawash, a writer in Al Dustour, said that increasing penalties on violators of traffic rules might not deter motorists from speeding or reckless driving. The writer said that the spreading of awareness among the public against speeding for instance, should be stepped up not only through the media but rather through the schools and the local communities. The latest increases in the number of road accidents reflect the fact that all measures which have been taken to curtail accidents have gone in vain and, said the writer, the time has come for the concerned authorities to try their hand at a different approach.

George Haddad, a columnist in Al Dustour, said it has become clear to all Arabs and the world at large that it is the Americans who insist on maintaining the embargo on Iraq. Despite the implementation of all U.N. resolutions, the Iraqis are still under siege because the United States wants to peddle its weapons and sell its arms to the Gulf states, which Washington continues to warn against Baghdad's imaginary threat, said the writer. It is regrettable, he said, to hear the Arab League Secretary General announcing that pan-Arab reconciliation and an end to Iraq's plight could only come through Baghdad's compliance with U.N. resolutions. The writer said that such statement reaffirms the fact that the Arab League has now deteriorated to the lowest level and can by no means be counted on to handle any Arab issue.

Gulf states frustrated but may sign NPT

By Ashraf Fouad

Reuter

DUBAI — Unwilling to give regional rivals Iran and Iraq pretexts to stay out of a global nuclear non-proliferation pact, Saudi-led Gulf Arabs may be persuaded to sign it despite their anger at Israel's refusal to do so.

Arab and Western political analysts also said the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) were reluctant to cross the United States, which rushed to their defence after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Washington is pushing its allies hard to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) when it comes up for renewal in April. But Arabs are dismayed that this pressure does not appear to include Israel, which has never signed the treaty. Israel is widely believed to have about 200 nuclear warheads, the only country in the Middle East to have a nuclear arsenal.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres insisted on Monday the Jewish state would not sign the treaty despite a sharp exchange with Egypt over the issue at a meeting of Arab-Israeli foreign ministers in Washington on Sunday.

The analysts said Gulf Arab states supported Egypt's campaign to persuade Israel to sign the treaty and resented the U.S. pressure on them as evidence of double standards that gave Israel the benefit of the doubt in the Middle East.

But they have so far stopped short of joining Cairo's demand that Arabs should make their signature conditional on Israel's accession to the treaty.

"GCC frustration with Israel putting itself forward as a special case is understood... but they have a different set of considerations than Egypt," said one Western diplomat.

"I'll be surprised if the GCC gives a definite 'no' to NPT," he said. "I don't think we are at a make-or-

break point. There is a lot at stake."

The logic of the argument on Israel is 100 per cent right and there is clear (U.S.) double standards. But, all things considered, I think the Gulf (Arab) states will sign the NPT," said an Arab analyst.

The United States has been trying to persuade the GCC that it should follow Iran, Gulf-based diplomats said.

"The GCC should take the moral high ground and not hold hostage a treaty of great impact on global peace. Iran is being fairly shrewd about this (NPT issue)," one Western diplomat said, reiterating Washington's argument.

Tehran has said it will remain an NPT signatory despite the treaty's flaws because it does not wish to be in the same camp as Israel.

Gulf Arabs have expressed concern about Iran's nuclear programme, which Washington says could develop a nuclear weapon in a few years. Iran insists its nuclear programme is peaceful.

"I think GCC states look more towards Iran. By not signing, they could give Iran a pretext to do the same something they do not want," said the Arab analyst.

The military machine of Iraq, including its nuclear arms programme, has been largely dismantled in line with 1991 Gulf war ceasefire resolutions, though some Western military experts say Baghdad can revive it if U.N. monitoring of its weapons programmes are loosened.

Iraq, once the Gulf's other main power, is also an NPT signatory, but it urged fellow Arab countries last month not to sign the treaty unless Israel did.

The GCC, Egypt and Syria, in the context of their four-year-old economic and political alliance, took a united stand earlier this month against international tolerance of Israel's refusal to sign the NPT.

LETTERS

Damaging comments

To the Editor:

I WOULD like to respond Hussam Deramieh's letter to the editor (Why people write letters, Jordan Times, Feb. 15). Since the writer took notice of two letters to the editor on two occasions, I would assume that he, like many Jordanians, reads the Times frequently.

The students of Jordanian universities could be offended, and rightly so, if we label all of them as non-readers of the Jordan Times. As for the public relations officers of our government, it would be such a pity if they do not bother to notice readers' comments in your paper. What happens when one of our "guests" sends in a comment? Does it go unnoticed?

Suggesting that we avoid talking about our problems in an English daily will not make such problems disappear, but will give the impression that we are indifferent to these problems and, for instance, think that it is okay to stare and make remarks at passers-by. Staring, incidentally, is not a secret we can keep from our guests; they experience it on a daily basis.

The writers' comments themselves are damaging to our image. He is requesting all Jordanians to refrain from writing about any negative side of our society in the Jordan Times and reserve such comments to Arabic dailies. All this in an open letter to the editor of the Jordan Times for all our "guests" to read!

Issam J. Rihani, Amman.

Somalia braced for new dark age

Mark Huband hears a 'moderate' say US peacekeeping 'bastards' don't have to be shot — then sees a local have to limbs cut off

A GUNMAN yelled from behind the silhouette of his raised Kalashnikov assault rifle outside the floodlit house in south Mogadishu.

"Go back, go back, go back! Nobody is to come here!" he shouted, his gun trained on our car's windshield. People milled in the shadows. There were no faces, only the forms thrown out by the lights perched on a wall strung with razor wire and broken glass set in concrete.

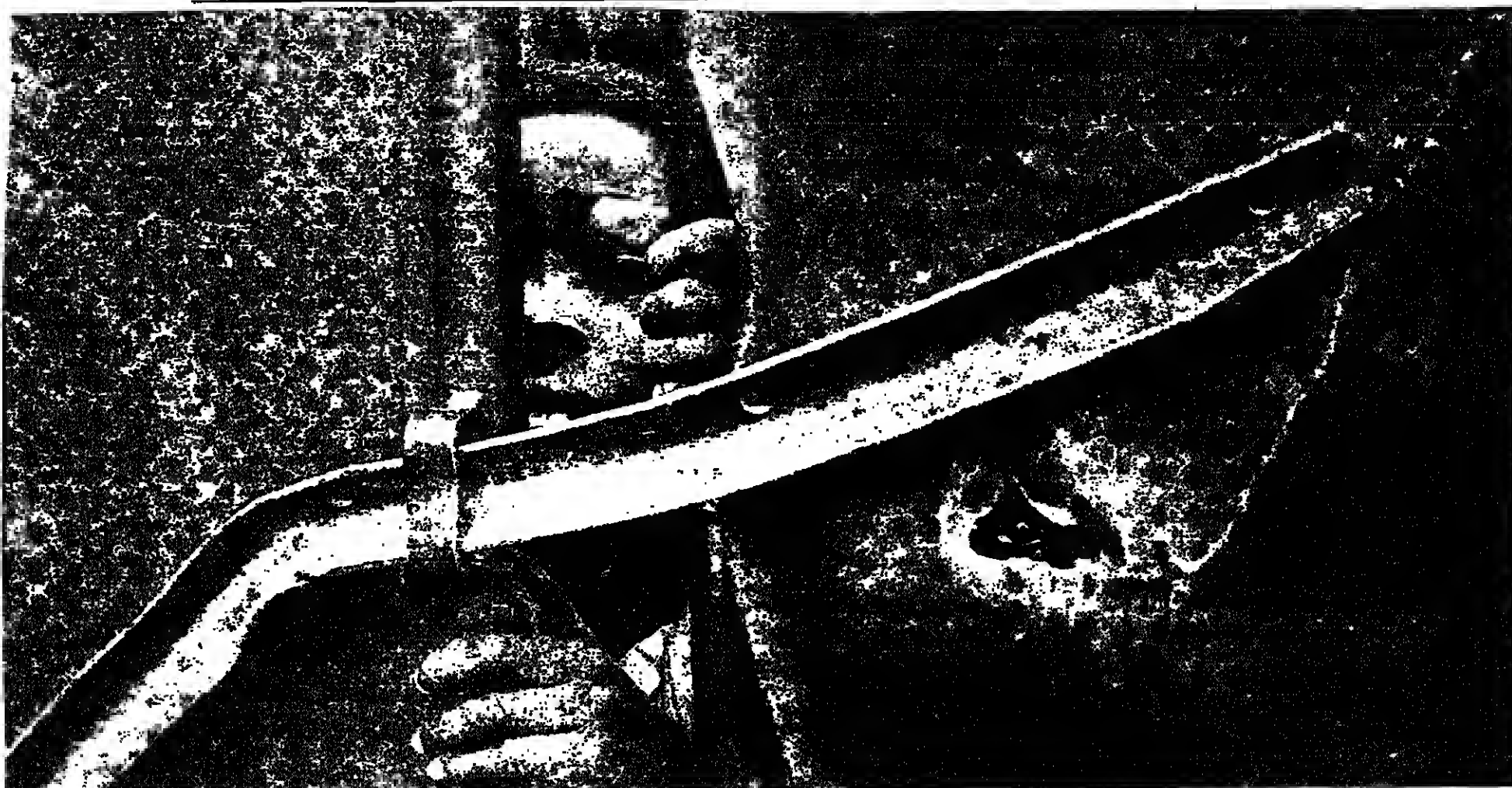
This was the headquarters of Osman Ato in Mogadishu last week. Until December Mr. Ato was the main financial backer and clan ally of faction leader General Mohammad Farah Aided. Now they are fighting each other and the tension rises every day as Somalia prepares for the United Nations pull-out and the murderous chaos that looms in its wake.

A car escorted by a truck with a mounted machinegun broadcast Mr. Ato's message that nobody should confront the estimated 8,000 American troops due to land this month to protect the withdrawing United Nations forces. Two hours earlier, a different car had broadcast Gen. Aided's opposing message. The car was shot at and two people died. The rival messages are the outward sign of preparation for conflict which has split the Habergidir clan at a time when unity is most needed.

Gen. Aided is fighting for his political life. Mr. Ato is hoping to save his own. Gen. Aided has not been seen in public for months, while Mr. Ato is limping around Mogadishu on crutches after a landmine blew away half his foot and took a chunk out of the other.

"We had a very heated row yesterday, Mr. Ato said after a meeting with Gen. Aided. "He has to give in. He wants to be president and prime minister, but he can't do it. I believe that he is walking in the middle of darkness, even among his own people and power base."

"We don't want anyone to bother the Americans, even though we have some differences and disputes with them, but that doesn't mean we have to shoot



Eye of the storm: The withdrawal of UN forces next month is clearing the way for a showdown as Somali factions take advantage of a diplomatic disaster

those (American) bastards."

Mr. Ato is planning to sue the U.S. government for the ill treatment he received in 1993 when the U.S. declared war on Gen. Aided and his followers. "But Aided has become so hard that he may find that everybody has abandoned him."

Throughout the city the newly aligned and newly split clans and sub-clans plot and counter-plot over who will be president when the U.N. leaves for good. The timetable for the departure has been kept extremely vague. While the U.N. mandate officially

ends on March 31, the Americans said on Friday that they hope to be out during the first week of the month.

All U.N. civilians are now bunkered down at Mogadishu airport, having moved from the former American embassy compound 12 days ago. The compound was rooted within minutes of their departure by gunmen who had camped outside overnight before the U.N. left.

The U.N. civilians were due to leave Mogadishu by Tuesday. The American troops, their helicopters and AC-130 bombing and surveillance planes flying

overhead, arrived by over-craft on Mogadishu missions all last week.

The troops will take over the port on Feb. 27 to provide a 'united shield' as the Pakistani, Malaysian, Bangladeshi and other U.N. troops leave.

The anti-shark net, which was strung beneath the waves just off the coast to allow U.N. employees to swim in peace, has already been removed so that U.S. amphibious craft can land. Thousands of tonnes of equipment now in the port is being removed as quickly as possible, to avoid it falling into the hands of the gunmen responsible for the

biggest disaster in U.N. history.

Perhaps nothing now could reunite the Habergidir leadership except war against their common enemy — the Abgal clan of north Mogadishu. But now men such as General Mohammad Nur Galal, who is emerging as leader of Gen. Aided's fighters, are making extensive contacts with the Abgal clan and its leader, Ali Mahdi Mohammad, in a bid to avert civil war.

Gen. Galal is short, smartly dressed, with greying hair and a friendly manner, and says: "When Aided sees the Habergidir

splitting, he always creates a conflict to reunite them. In the past the Habergidir have always been willing to follow him. But there have been many casualties. Most of the Habergidir are ready to reconcile with the other clans."

After five years of civil war, Gen. Aided's men, patrolling in their gun-mounted Toyota Land Cruisers, are as beleaguered as the city of rubble, bullet-riddled villas and sand-clogged streets.

Gunmen at Gen. Aided's checkpoints take money from passing cars. In previous years they had plenty of money; now they

are raising funds. At a checkpoint on the port road a gunman trained his Kalashnikov at the head of a taxi driver, took 500 Somali shillings from him, lowered the gun and then handed the driver a receipt before waving him on.

To avoid his eclipse, Gen. Aided has secured the support of Mohammed Kanyar Afrah — who defected from Ali Mahdi last September and is now his closest military ally.

The question is: Who will be in the top seat. Which clan and which person? said Mr. Farah, who is now based in a few dark and sweltering rooms at a

Mogadishu hotel whose courtyard teems with his gunmen. "We are not ideologists. There's nothing for nothing. Politics isn't holy. It's interests. When we are in politics we are salesmen. We sell the politics to people. And every clan and sub-clan has the same concern."

Ali Mahdi must accept Gen. Aided as president and himself as vice-president. If he refuses, or forms his own government, then there will be fighting. "We will attack to eliminate," he said.

The U.N. Somalia having spent \$2.5b. Its mission has been a qualified success on a humanitarian front, its military mission a failure and its political aim of bringing law, order and government back to Somalia a complete disaster.

The departure is a race against time to a certain extent. It's unprecedented for a U.N. operation to be functioning but also packing up," said George Bennett, the UNOSOM spokesman.

Private contractors working for the U.N. are feeling the hunt of the rush to leave. The U.N.'s Australian caterers, Morris Supplies, which had a \$100m contract to feed the troops and civilians, reckons the U.N. will owe it \$20m in unpaid bills by the end of the month.

The company claims it does not have the money to pay off its workers, but its Somali employees and local traders to which it owes money will not let them go.

"Before they kill us, one of us will get kidnapped. That's the way they operate. There's no way if we backed now that we would make it to the airport. We owe too much money to leave here alive, and we have told the U.N. that," said Morris's managing director, Robert McVicker, who has a private army which will guard him until the bills are paid.

Back on the streets, the militias will be extorting, threatening and killing to survive, plunging the country once more under the rule of the gun, as the world closes its eyes on what Somalia is to become.

The Observer

King guest of honour at summit

(Continued from page 1)

March 6 to 12.

In less than a fortnight two major crises in the diplomatic field deriving partly from the upcoming summit have embarrassed the Danish government.

A visit by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmood Vaezi, who, due to the fatwa issued against British author Salman Rushdie, was denied entry to neighbouring Norway and Sweden, aroused harsh attacks in both the parliament and the majority of the press.

Many critics accused the government of neglecting insistence on human rights in order to protect the Danish export of feta cheese which

last year amounted to 28,000 tonnes to Iran.

Observers assessed that the government deemed a non-committal conduct necessary in view of its impending role as host of several other foreign government representatives from countries being accused of flagrant violations of the world charter on human rights.

Hardly had the Iranian visitor departed for Paris from Copenhagen airport before a journalist arriving from Accra at the very same airport forced the Danish government into swift action to prevent impending accusations of racism.

Neglecting a fully valid visa the passport police denied entry for the Ghanaian repor-

ter as he did not bring with him an invitation to visit Denmark issued by the Foreign Ministry so he could make arrangements for his coverage of the social summit.

The incident prompted both the development and the foreign ministers to publish strict instructions for the passport authorities to demonstrate considerably higher standards of conduct and flexibility. This, the ministers stressed, will be imperative when the massive influx of more than 20,000 both official and non-governmental representatives joined by an estimated 5,000 media people from all over the world head for Copenhagen in the days to come.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Thursday the State Department is looking into the New York Times story.

He pointed out the United States has been the leader in trying to ensure that the sanctions against Iraq are enforced. "Embargoes or sanctions are seldom perfect, and there unfortunately is almost always a certain amount of leakage," he said. "We're looking into this particular report. If accurate, we would certainly want to take steps with respect to that leakage. But the important thing overall is to understand how much pressure we have put on the Iraqis, how important those sanctions are."

He noted that the U.N. resolutions provide an opportunity for the Iraqis to sell their oil and use the proceeds for humanitarian purposes. "They've been unwilling to do that, which can only mean to us that if they sell their oil they probably want to use the funds they get for weapons purchases or some other deleterious purpose," Mr. Christopher said.

White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry confirmed the report that Iraq is selling oil in violation of United Nations sanctions, but in quantities far below those cited. "Our own experts estimate" the leakage is 80,000 to 100,000 barrels a day rather than 200,000 barrels, he said.

Meanwhile, the government is continuing with preparations for presidential elections to be held before the end of the year.

Algerian

(Continued from page 12)

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most radical of the factions fighting the military-backed regime, and AIS, the armed wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), have threatened more suicide attacks. On Jan. 30, a suicide bombing in central Algiers killed 42 people and injured 286. The FIS claimed responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, the government is continuing with preparations for presidential elections to be held before the end of the year.

Ekeus to probe

(Continued from page 12)

of \$14 a barrel for similar Middle Eastern oil, the paper said.

"That's a big discount, which explains why many of us are willing to take risks to move that oil," an unnamed London-based trader told the Times.

The United Nations allows Iraq to export just 75,000 barrels a day to Jordan, to cover Iraqi costs for the purchase of medicine and food. The country had been exporting 2.5 million barrels a day before the Gulf war, for revenues of \$12.7 billion a year.

Using the clandestine network, Iraq is exporting about 200,000 barrels a day, the Times said.

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Opposition says Iran trains kamikaze pilots against Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — Iran is training kamikaze pilots to attack Israel and plans to send spies masquerading as immigrants to the Jewish state, an exiled Iranian opposition figure said in an interview published Friday.

Manouchehr Ganji said he chose to talk to the Yedioth Ahronoth daily because he wanted to win support in Israel for Iranian expatriates seeking to topple Iran's Shiite Muslim fundamentalist rulers.

"I think that Israel has an interest in helping the Iranian opposition topple the government of terror," said Mr. Ganji, who lives in Paris and heads a small group called the Organisation for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in Iran.

Mr. Ganji, a former Iranian education minister, said he was looking for help in building a shortwave radio station to broadcast from France to Iran.

Mr. Ganji, who claims he is number one on Iran's

wanted-dead list, quoted what he said were reliable sources in Iran who told him the government was training suicide pilots for missions to Israel. He said the pilots were trained in secret camps.

"According to the report, four pilots have completed the course and have already left Iran in order to get ready for the mission," Mr. Ganji told Yedioth Ahronoth.

Mr. Ganji also said that Iran is planning to send agents to Israel. "They will go undercover as Jewish immigrants, apparently from Syria, but this is not definite," he said.

The director general of Israel's defence ministry, David Ivri, warned in an interview Friday that Iran was buying sophisticated war planes and long-range missiles that could reach Israel. The Iranian threat is not an immediate one, but if we do not prepare ourselves now, we are liable to find ourselves without a satisfactory way to

respond in the future," Mr. Ivri told the daily Davar.

Amid U.S. pressure to isolate Iran, the country's supreme leader warned Friday that the Iranian nation would not buckle, Tehran Radio reported.

"I state here in the presence of multitudes of worshippers, on behalf of every individual of the nation, that the enemies of Islam can never bring the Iranian nation to its knees," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a sermon at Tehran University.

He said last week's massive turnout at a rally in Tehran to mark the 16th anniversary of Iran's Islamic revolution proved to Iran's enemies that their efforts to weaken the clerical Muslim establishment were doomed to failure.

"The Americans are plotting with every government they can to bring pressure on the Iranian nation, to force the Iranian government to surrender," he said in the sermon aired on Tehran Radio, monitored in Cyprus.

The United States, which identifies Iran as a "rogue state" for allegedly sponsoring international terrorism, has sought to persuade Tehran's trader partners to downgrade their commercial activities with the Iranians.

Washington, which alleges Iran is involved in a covert nuclear weapons programme, also has been trying to dissuade Russia from selling nuclear reactors to the Iranians. But Russia said this week it would go ahead with the sale.

Iranian officials say Washington has no evidence for its allegations against Iran, but is angered at Iranian opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace plan.

Earlier this week state-run Tehran Radio said the United States was like "a giant in the service of Zionism."

Clinton administration officials are encouraged that a strenuous lobbying effort has thus far headed off approval by Japan of the \$450 million loan to Iran.

The administration has given high priority to isolating Iran but has had difficulty winning broad international support. Germany maintains close ties with Iran and a Russian agreement to provide nuclear reactors and training to Iran is a sore point in U.S. relations with Moscow.

U.S. officials have pushed hard — thus far successfully — to persuade Japan not to go ahead with the loan, which is the second instalment on a power project said to be worth \$1.5 billion. Japan says the loan request is still alive.

"The U.S. government is expressing its concerns, and we take into consideration what they say," said Hiroshi Hashimoto, an official at the Japanese embassy in Washington.

He noted that the proposed loan would not be earmarked for the Iranian government, but for the Iranian firms carrying out the project in the southern part of the country.

In response to statements by U.S. officials that Japan has deferred a decision, Mr. Hashimoto said: "There is no set period as to when we should decide."

He acknowledged there is a fundamental difference in the way Japan and the United States perceive Iran.

"We believe it is very dangerous to isolate Iran," he said.

Arafat rejects 'Jenin- first' offer

(Continued from page 1)

During the symposium, entitled "The Mediterranean After the Peace, What Future?" guests — including

former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and other past and present government ministers from va-

rious countries — will discuss topics such as the future status of Jerusalem and economic prospects for the region.

Juppe warns Egypt in NPT row

(Continued from page 11)

programme. Mr. Mubarak has insisted that Egypt would only sign the extension of the NPT, if Israel did the same.

But Israel has refused, citing its special "security" concerns, and has never confirmed Western reports that it possesses about 200 nuclear warheads.

Mr. Musa reasserted Thursday in Bonn, after talks with German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, that his government could not commit itself to a prolongation of the NPT unless Israel also signed the treaty.

Israel insists it will not sign the treaty until it is satisfied that countries will not sign the treaty until it is satisfied that countries like Iran, Iraq and Libya do not pose a threat to it.

means to hint that Egypt is going in a direction hostile to Israel. I feel sorry for this... I wish Rabin will be more accurate rather than complicating relations between us," Mr. Mubarak said in Cairo.

"I could tell you very frankly that we would like Israel to sign the NPT because Israel is just on our borders... any leakage or anything that happens threatens the national security of this country," the president said.

"I am not speaking about the Arab World. I am speaking about Egypt. It is insecure to have all these nuclear weapons in Israel without any inspection from the international community."

Mr. Mubarak denied allegations made by Mr. Rabin to parliament that Egypt tried to influence African states, including Tanzania, Djibouti and Comoros.

not to establish ties with Israel.

The Israeli daily Haaretz reported Friday that the United States had demanded that Israel take "unilateral steps" to avoid a full-blown crisis with Egypt.

Algerian

(Continued from page 12)

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most radical of the factions fighting the military-backed regime, and AIS, the armed wing of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), have threatened more suicide attacks. On Jan. 30, a suicide bombing in central Algiers killed 42 people and injured 286. The FIS claimed responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, the government is continuing with preparations for presidential elections to be held before the end of the year.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

U.S. posts worst merchandise trade deficit

هكذا من الأحرار

French writs accused in cocaine trial
PARIS (AP) — A French court has ordered the arrest of 15 people, including a school teacher, accused of cocaine trafficking. The writs were issued in connection with a trial of a Frenchman accused of cocaine trafficking. The writs were issued in connection with a trial of a Frenchman accused of cocaine trafficking.

Business Daily Beat
A review of economic news from the Arabic press

CBJ eases pressure

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has eased its pressure on banks to meet the new limits (AI Aswag).

Vanessa Parra arrested for drugs possession

MONTREAL (AP) — A woman named Vanessa Parra was arrested for possession of drugs. She was arrested in Montreal, Canada.

'God Must Have Forgotten Me'

PARIS (AP) — A woman named 'God Must Have Forgotten Me' was arrested for possession of drugs. She was arrested in Paris, France.

India's 'Band Queen' embroiled in Buddhism

NAGPUR, India — A woman named 'Band Queen' was embroiled in Buddhism. She was a prominent figure in the Buddhist community in Nagpur, India.

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British firm sets up office in Amman to help businesses

By a Jordan Times staff reporter
AMMAN — A British group has set up an office in Amman to act as a data centre that would help British firms do business with Jordan and other countries in the region as prospects have brightened with the breakthroughs in Arab-Israeli peace process. The British Middle East Interests Group, opened its regional office in Amman last week, will "act as a facilitator" by gathering and passing on information on opportunities and details relevant to doing business in the region, said Stephen Crouch, a senior representative of the group. Mr. Crouch said he and colleagues have been holding a series of meetings in Amman in the past week. They held talks with Chief Chamberlain Prince R'ad Ben Zaid and Amman Financial Market (AFM) Director-General Omayya Touqan on Thursday.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 661270
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD 11/02/1995 - 15/02/1995
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PSC	490,955	184.500	184.500	187.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	47,122	4.150	4.150	4.310
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	81,589	4.100	4.300	4.220
BANK OF JORDAN	3,952	2.580	2.580	3.950
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	3,496	1.440	1.440	1.420
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	12,433	2.650	2.650	2.650
THE HOUSING BANK	144,247	9.950	9.950	9.010
JORDAN MIDDLE EAST BANK	29,782	2.950	2.950	2.980
JORDAN GULF BANK	24,758	1.370	1.370	1.480
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	129,492	2.720	2.720	2.780
HOUSING BANK	800	3.400	3.400	3.950
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	3,063	4.170	4.170	4.160
ROYAL BANK OF JORDAN	4,810	3.950	3.950	2.100
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	93,176	1.290	1.290	1.300
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	7,758	4.150	4.150	4.000
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	21,254	1.400	1.400	1.420
BANKS SECTOR	111,723	INDEX NUMBER: 159.70	CHANGE: +1.64%	
MIDDLE EAST INSURANCE	21,500	3.500	3.500	3.500
ARABIAN SEAS INSURANCE	205	1.950	1.950	1.950
GENERAL ARABIA INSURANCE	9,376	2.700	2.700	3.000
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	6,184	2.290	2.290	2.630
INSURANCE SECTOR	47,359	INDEX NUMBER: 136.30	CHANGE: +0.55%	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	52,402	1.460	1.460	1.540
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	135,142	1.360	1.260	1.440
JORDAN WIND ENERGY	443	2.950	2.950	2.950
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	22,076	6.700	6.700	6.860
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	360,329	3.150	3.150	2.410
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	22,551	2.110	2.110	2.310
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	582	0.970	0.970	0.970
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRAI	1,201	11.950	31.950	11.650
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMERCIAL HOTELS	19,798	2.270	2.270	2.440
ARAB TRAVEL, TOURS & EDUCATION	81,748	3.600	3.600	3.640
SERVICES SECTOR	696,290	INDEX NUMBER: 132.07	CHANGE: +0.18%	
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	4,421	34.500	34.500	34.500
THE JORDAN CIGARETTE FACTORIES	107,191	2.950	2.950	2.950
JOB ARAB TOBACCO/NEW	9,287	5.050	5.050	5.950
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	59,869	9.400	9.400	9.400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	5,401	3.900	3.900	3.950
THE JORDAN WOODEN MILLS	87,858	7.450	7.450	7.450
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	425,524	4.160	4.160	4.500
JORDAN TRADING INDUSTRIES	1,499	5.900	5.900	5.900
JORDAN DAILY	210	2.100	2.100	2.100
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	1,072	2.700	2.700	2.690
SOUDAN & WEAVING	9,865	2.540	2.540	2.970
RAJIA INDUSTRIES	34,299	2.710	2.710	2.810
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	169,234	7.780	7.780	8.060
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	28,791	0.930	0.930	0.960
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	41,480	6.700	6.700	6.700
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	84,192	0.740	0.740	0.770
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	29,023	1.360	1.360	1.420
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	9,122	4.000	4.000	4.040
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	10,972	2.370	2.370	2.470
JORDAN ROCKETRY INDUSTRIES	9,047	1.400	1.400	1.430
ALABON INDUSTRIES	16,622	4.500	4.500	4.200
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & WATCH/JEWELRY	21,011	0.780	0.780	0.760
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	27,341	4.850	4.850	4.820
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	3,748	1.750	1.750	1.730
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	9,884	2.520	2.520	2.560
RAJIA INVESTMENT	693	1.700	1.700	1.700
UNIVERSAL WOODEN INDUSTRIES	75,175	3.960	3.960	4.200
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	89,636	1.890	1.890	2.050
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	127,128	INDEX NUMBER: 124.11	CHANGE: +1.40%	
GRAND TOTAL	32,7596	INDEX NUMBER: 143.00		

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD 11/02/1995 - 15/02/1995
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
GENERAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	30,945	0.040	0.060	0.060
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	95,305	0.770	0.770	0.800
TABATA REALTY UNIVERSITY	35,033	2.500	1.500	1.460
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	67,158	2.250	2.250	2.310
ARAB PSC INC.	102,474	0.960	0.960	1.010
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	5,989	1.050	1.050	1.070
NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO. LTD	63,766	1.440	1.440	1.480
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS LTD.	2,550	1.140	1.140	1.110
JORDAN POLYMER INDUSTRIES LTD.	54,820	1.450	1.450	1.470
NATIONAL MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES	45,252	1.120	1.120	1.200
AL-KAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	20,097	2.250	2.250	2.300
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	137,996	1.430	1.430	1.560
UNIVERSAL METALS	1,750	2.790	1.750	1.750
NATIONAL ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES	12,155	1.120	1.120	1.200
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	8,323	2.700	2.700	2.600
JORDAN STEEL	35,276	0.960	0.960	0.970
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	32,573	1.120	1.120	1.030
GRAND TOTAL	812,239			

Financial Markets
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 16-2-1995

Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	0.6980	0.7000
Sterling Pound	1.0936	1.1041
Deutsche Mark	0.4635	0.4658
Swiss Franc	0.5460	0.5527
French Franc	0.1335	0.1345
Japanese Yen	0.7117	0.7155
Dutch Guilder	0.4134	0.4155
Swedish Krona	0.0435	0.0437
Italian Lira	0.0435	0.0437
Belgian Franc	0.0435	0.0437

Other Currencies
Date: 16-2-1995

Currency	Buy	Sell
Lebanese Lira	1.8370	1.8490
Saudi Riyal	0.041845	0.042785
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.1856	0.1871
Qatari Riyal	2.5500	2.5600
Egyptian Pound	0.1905	0.19205
Omani Riyal	0.1850	0.1870
UAE Dirham	0.1896	0.1905
Greek Drachma	0.0435	0.0437
Cypriot Pound	1.4235	1.4250

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Trade talks give boost to Jordanian stock prices

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Positive political developments in the Middle East directly and indirectly linked to Jordan gave a boost to trading and stock prices at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) last week, brokers said Friday. They attributed the improvement in the market also to investor expectations that foreign funds were coming in after several months during which Western firms assessed the situation before making up their minds to buy Jordanian stock. The weekly report of the AFM said last week's turnover was JD 4 million, up 17 per cent from the previous week's JD 3.4 million. The general share price index closed at 143 points, gaining 2.5 points, or 1.7 per cent, during the week after steadily dropping over three weeks. The index of the banking sector, the dominant segment in the market, closed at 159.7 points after gaining 2.6 points or 1.64 per cent; the insurance stock index went up by 0.8 points, or 0.6 per cent, to close at 136.30 points; the services sector index gained 4.1 points or 3.18 per cent, to close at 132.06 points; and the industrial sector index registered an increase of 1.7 points, or 1.4 per cent, and closed at 124.11 points. Industrial stock accounted for JD 1.85 million, or 45.8 per cent, of the weekly volume, followed by commercial banks and financial institutions with JD 1.11 million, or 27.5 per cent, the services sector with JD 1.03 million, or 25.5 per cent, and insurance stock with JD 47,000 or 1.2 per cent, the AFM report said. The report said 1.7 million shares of 73 companies were traded during the week; as trading closed on Wednesday, 43 of them had gained, 17 had lost and 13 remained stable. Brokers said there were several reasons for the rise. Foremost among them were the Feb. 7-8 meetings in Taba that brought together the ministers of trade from Jordan, Israel, Egypt and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho with U.S. Commerce Secretary of State Ronald Brown. The Taba meeting, whose final statement contained a reiteration of the ministers to free regional trade, was followed by a brief visit to Aqaba by Mr. Brown. In Aqaba, Mr. Brown announced that Jordan and the U.S. were working on a free trade agreement and that Washington remained committed to the economic development of the Kingdom. "The Taba statement and Mr. Brown's comments in Aqaba were music to Jordanian investors' ears," said a broker, who like other AFM dealers, are not allowed to be identified by name under standing market guidelines. "The investors had already taken note of the cordiality of the Taba meeting which was totally unlike the differences and rift that characterise any Arab-Israeli meeting," said the broker. Another factor that contributed to the rise in AFM prices was an investor anticipation that foreign operators might be coming in with funds into the market. The sentiment was sparked when they convinced themselves that foreign operators saw the prices had reached a bottom line two weeks ago when the index had gone down to less than 141 points. "The investors saw a foreign firm, which has not been active in the market despite having had secure permission several months ago, buying some of the Jordanian blue chips," said the broker. Although the actual purchase involved "only a small amount of funds," the very fact that a foreign firm was buying "was enough to trigger many into adopting advance positions by acquiring shares that they thought foreign companies might get around to buying," said the broker. "It may or may not work out that way, but that is the way Jordanian investors have set the rules of the game and behave in the market," added the broker.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.4124/34	Canadian dollar
	1.4832/42	Deutschmarks
	1.624/34	Dutch guilders
	1.2530/40	Swiss francs
	30.54/58	Belgian francs
	5.1555/05	French francs
	1603.84/8	Italian lire
	97.28/38	Japanese yen
	7.3225/25	Swedish crowns
	6.5130/80	Norwegian crowns
	5.8556/06	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.5770/80	
One ounce of gold	\$376.30/376.70	

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Violence does not deter England's Euro plans

LONDON (AP) — English soccer officials vowed Thursday to forge ahead with plans to host next year's European Championship in England, saying its ticketing plans would thwart any attempts by hooligans to disrupt the tournament.

With European soccer governing body UEFA demanding a report into Wednesday night's riot by English fans at an international match in Dublin, the English Football Association said moving the championship would amount to a victory for the hooligans.

"Euro '96 should and must go ahead," FA spokesman David Davies told a press conference. "We understand the view of those who say the championship should not go ahead, but who would have won then? A tiny percentage of mindless thugs or more than a million genuine fans who want to have the footballing experience of a lifetime?"

Tournament director Glen Korton said the FA's 10-point ticketing plan would prevent any known hooligan from gaining admission to the championship, which takes place in eight cities from June 8-June 30, 1996.

"I can guarantee any one on our list of undesirable will not get a ticket," Korton said.

The FA said it had launched an inquiry into the incident and its report would be on its way to UEFA headquarters in Switzerland next week. UEFA, which has the power to move the tournament out of England, said it would pass the report along with one from the FA of Ireland, on to the championship's organizing committee for consideration.

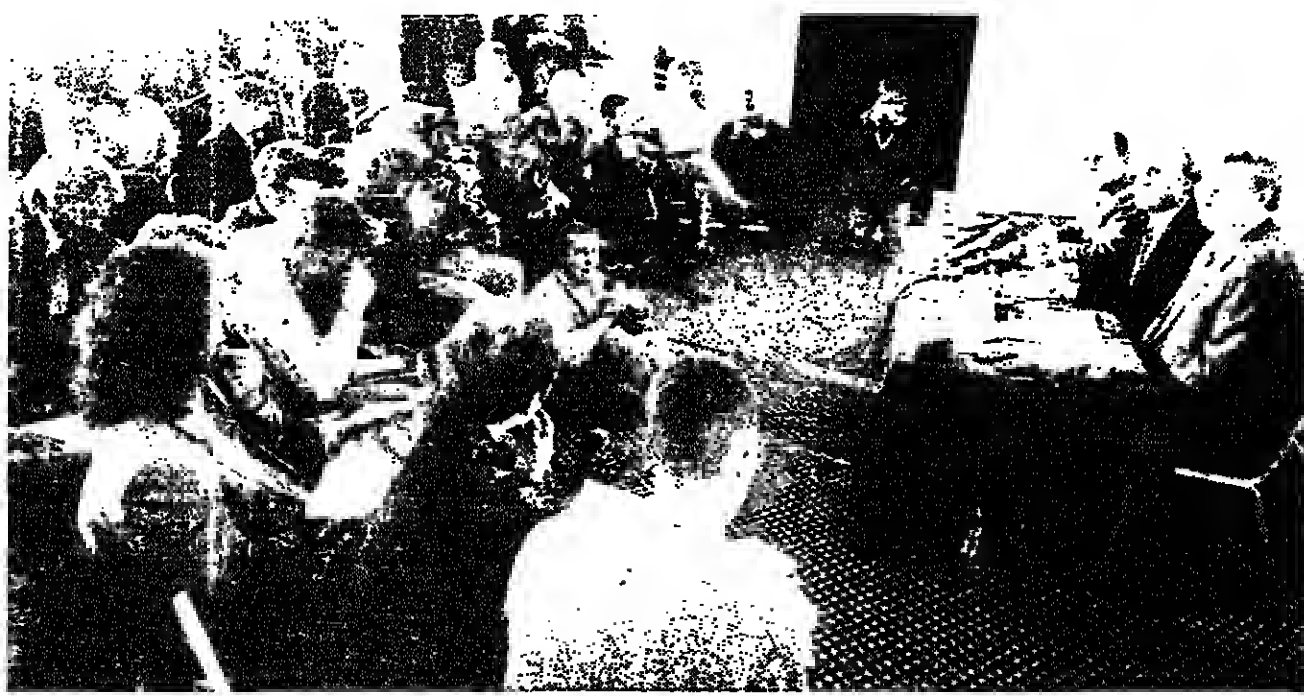
"It's a very sensitive problem," UEFA spokesman Salvatore Cuccu said. "We need time to see what we are going to do because it is the major football event in England that could be in danger."

"We will wait to hear the full report before we make the final decision," added UEFA President Lennart Johansson.

Several British newspapers and commentators in both Britain and Ireland called Thursday for England to withdraw as host. But FA chief executive Graham Kelly insisted his people could handle the job.

"We are fully capable, given the right policing and all the precautions that have been taken over the years, to carry on with staging that championship," Kelly said.

The riot began after Ireland scored the opening goal in the match at Lansdowne Road. English spectators, who had been taunting Irish supporters with Nazi salutes and chants such as "no surrender to the IRA," began breaking up the wooden and metal bleachers and hurling pieces of them at the Irish



Football chiefs face the media 16 February following Wednesday's riots during the Ireland vs England match in Dublin. (L-R) are Glenn Korton, director of Euro '96, David Davies, media spokesman, and Football Association Chief executive

fans beneath them.

The game was stopped after 28 minutes, the first time in English soccer history that a match involving the national team had to be abandoned due to crowd trouble.

Police arrested some 40 people from England and three from Ireland, and 40 people were treated at a hospital for various injuries, in one case a fractured skull. An Irish man in his 60s died of a heart attack while leaving the stadium, although police said he was not thought to be related to the violence.

British news reports cited evidence that the violence was the work of a shadowy far-rightist group called Combat 18. The reports claimed the group has strong links with loyalist paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland.

The FA appealed to fans to identify the culprits.

"Many of them were recognised from newspaper photographs or television stills," Davies said. "We urge true football supporters to ring if they can help. We trust the law will be used to its limits to punish those involved last night."

Joao Havelange, president of world governing body FIFA, disagreed with those calling for England to be removed as host of the Europeans.

"Everything will continue as planned," Havelange said. "Because of a localised problem which should be dealt with by local authorities, England does not deserve to have a sporting right withdrawn."

Because of the English fans' notorious reputation, the ticket allocation for the national team's away matches is strictly controlled by official soccer travel clubs, but fans at Wednesday night's game said the hooligans could have easily purchased their tickets from scalpers

outside the stadium.

Korton said the plan for Euro '96 involves a computer database that will list the name of every fan who buys a ticket. The purchaser's name will be printed on the ticket and only four will be available per person to keep them out of the hands of scalpers.

But, Korton said: "There is no 100 per cent guarantee that no person will pass on a ticket."

UEFA gave the England the Europeans after English hooliganism appeared to be on the wane. The violence was at its worst when 39 Italian fans were killed in a riot involving English spectators at the European Champions Cup final in Brussels in May 1985.

Although improved security measures have eased the problem since, the hooligans have continued to make their presence known. The last time England played a game of any importance, a World Cup qualifier in the Netherlands in October 1993, the English rioted in the streets of Rotterdam.

This latest violence was the latest in a spate of ugly incidents that have marred soccer since last summer's World Cup. Fan deaths in Italy and France led to mass postponements of games in those countries, and French and Manchester United striker Eric Cantona was banned for the rest of the English League season after leaping into the stands to kick a spectator last month.

Irish PM condemns 'appalling thuggery'

In Dublin Irish Prime Minister John Bruton told a husband parliament on Thursday that the soccer rioting that halted a friendly match between England and Ireland was caused by "appalling thuggery" by a minority of English fans.

Graham Kelly. They called on genuine supporters to turn in the thugs and help them save the 1996 European Championships in the country (AFP photo)

Hooligans make headlines again

LONDON (AP) — Arrogant, intimidating, Proud, Unashamed. The English soccer hooligan.

He's male, usually working class and poorly educated — and extremely right-wing.

It would be easy to say he's back. But he never really left.

"The belief in recent years that the problem has gone away or had even been cured, partly as a result of all-seater stadiums, is simply not true," said Eric Dunning of the Centre for Football Research at Leicester University.

The problem reared its ugly head again Wednesday night when hooligans forced the Ireland-England friendly in Dublin to be abandoned in the first half.

Ireland scored a goal to take the lead, that was the last straw. The hooligans began ripping up the very stands they were sitting on and throwing wooden planks, metal railings and other projectiles onto the fans in the deck below. Some 40 people were hospitalised.

It was a first even for England's notorious followers: Never before had the national team — in more than 122 years of international play — been forced to abandon a match because of crowd trouble.

The offenders reacted not with remorse but with pride, waving and cheering to television cameras.

It was the same kind of defiance that had been seen time and again from England supporters across the continent in the 1970s and '80s.

In recent years, it appeared that the problem was on the wane after clubs and police tightened security in response to the fan violence of the '80s, which climaxed when 39 Italians were killed in a riot involving English spectators at the European Champions Cup final in Brussels, Belgium, in May 1985.

Surveillance cameras were installed at most grounds. All-seater stadiums were mandated for top clubs. Lists of known hooligans were compiled in an effort to keep them from getting tickets to away matches.

But that didn't eradicate the problem, says Patrick Murphy, also of the Leicester Research Centre. He says the government and the media, in an effort to "deny the hooligans the oxygen of publicity," had stopped reported all but the most obvious incidents.

"There has been an attempt to minimise the level of which the hooligans continue, and to maximise the success of the policies," Murphy said. "The grounds are well-policed, but the success within the grounds has led to displacement and a level of disorder outside the grounds, and these incidents have gone unreported."

"The British transport police listed over 600 fans-related incidents from 1990-94, the vast majority unreported," Murphy said. "What was previously a very sexy subject which led to sensational headlines has been downgraded or ignored."

On the international level, it helped that England's national team hadn't played a road game more than a year before Wednesday's trip to Dublin. At its last match of any significance, a World Cup qualifier in the Netherlands in October 1993, the English fans rioted in the streets of Rotterdam.

But the ugliness in Ireland once again put soccer on the front page. British newspapers called the hooligans everything from "scum" to "lepers of the world."

"There actually as human as we are, but they adhere to different values," Murphy said. "They predominantly come from working class backgrounds and have an aggressive masculinity, seen in the street culture, that manifests itself in many facets of society."

Murphy said the hooligans showed tendencies of xenophobia, racism and sexism.

"Being brought up in their kind of background, fighting becomes a source of status to them, part and parcel of this is gang formation and the willingness to hunt in packs."

No reply for England-Ireland match

England will not be returning to Dublin in the foreseeable future, despite Ireland manager Jack Charlton's plea to rearrange the match, abandoned after hooligans rioted on Wednesday night.

Charlton suggested the match could be rescheduled before the end of the season, but England's Football Association (F.A.) consider the idea impractical.

"It's a little bit early to start rearranging the match," F.A. spokeswoman Clare Tomlinson said Friday.

"There is still a lot of work to be done on finding out what went wrong and why it went wrong."

Greek clubs top standings

LONDON (R) — Former NBA star Eddie Johnson sank an impressive 34 points to lead Olympiakos to an 89-64 triumph over Bologna in a European Clubs' Championship qualifier in Athens Thursday.

The victory secured the Greeks second place in Group B giving them the home advantage in the play-offs.

With one match left in the semifinals series, French champions Limoges top the group, cementing their position on Thursday with a 76-67 victory over fallen Spanish giants Badalona.

Efes Pilsen moved into third place after an 81-76 success against Barcelona who slipped back to fourth with Bologna.

In Group A, Panathinaikos and Real Madrid are safely through to the next stage, the Greeks beating Ljubljana 79-66 and the Spanish club dismissing Paok Salonika 69-52 on Thursday.

The top four clubs from each group progress to the next stage.

Italy's Pesaro are also through after an easy 88-69 Group A victory over Benfica.

But the star Thursday night was Johnson with his fine 34 points.

"It was about time I found my touch," Johnson said after the final whistle in Athens as 15,000 fans chanted his name.

The Greeks were explosive, leading throughout despite the absence of two of their best players with broken legs.

They shrugged off last week's home defeat by Limoges, largely through Johnson's remarkable long-range accuracy.

Bologna relied on Serb power forward Predrag Danilovic who sank 27 points.

American Michael Young also scored 27 points — for Limoges who were generally



Lithuanian player of Real Madrid Arvidas Sabonis (right) goes for a layup (AFP photo)

EUROPEAN BASKETBALL

in control against Badalona.

The French club led 29-20 after 15 minutes, but at half time it was 38-37 as the Spaniards clung on.

Young turned on the heat in the second half. "It was difficult at times but we were able to find the right solutions and Mike (Young) helped us tremendously," said Limoges playmaker

Frederic Forte.

"We didn't play a great match but we knew a place in the last eight was at stake and we were a little bit tense," said captain Richard Dacoury. "We won and that's all that really counts."

Real Madrid beat Paok Salonika with strong performance by foreigner Arvidas Sabonis of Lithuania.

STANDINGS

Group A B

Panathinaikos (Greece)	13	9	4	22
Real Madrid	13	9	4	22
Pesaro (Italy)	13	9	4	22
CSKA Moscow (Russia)	13	8	5	21
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel)	13	7	6	20
Paok Salonika (Greece)	13	5	8	18
Olimpija Ljubljana (Slovenia)	13	3	10	16
Benfica (Portugal)	13	2	11	15

Group B

Olympiakos (Greece)	13	9	4	22
Limoges (France)	13	9	4	22
Efes Pilsen (Turkey)	13	8	5	21
Bologna (Italy)	13	7	6	20
Barcelona (Spain)	13	7	6	20
Cibona Zagreb (Croatia)	13	7	6	20
Bayer Leverkusen (Germany)	13	4	9	17
Juventut Badalona (Spain)	13	1	12	14

Atlanta plans largest torch relay

ATLANTA (R) — The largest torch relay in the history of the Olympics is planned for the 1996 centennial of the modern games, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) announced Thursday.

ACOG president Billy Payne said that once the torch is delivered to the United States on April 27 after a ceremony in Athens, the torch relay will last 84 days and cover some 15,000 miles.

With the addition of 16 days of competition, the Olympic flame will burn for 100 days in the United States to mark the centennial.

"The torch relay route we are planning will allow millions of Americans to view the Olympic flame as it passes through or near their communities," said Payne, who added that 10,000 torchbearers would have the opportunity of carrying the torch.

In the spring of 1996, the Olympic flame will be kindled from the rays of the sun in a traditional ceremony in Olympia, Greece, the birthplace of the Olympics. The Hellenic Olympic Committee will organise a torch relay across Greece before the torch is transferred to ACOG's guardianship.

Milan-Lazio rematch a must-win for both

ROME (AP) — AC Milan isn't accustomed to must-win matches, other than prestigious cup finals.

But despite their current 11-game undefeated string, the defending Italian and European champs face such a dire situation this Sunday at Lazio of Rome.

A loss for either club in his rematch of the season's best game to date would snuff championship hopes.

Following a 1-1 draw with Genoa on Wednesday in the makeup for the Jan. 29 match suspended following the death of a fan, Milan is 7-9-3 (30 points) and in a virtual tie for sixth place.

Lazio is 9-4-6 (31 points) and tied for fourth.

Both trail leader Juventus of Turin (42 points) by significant but not insurmountable margins. The clubs have been heading in opposite directions, however.

Milan, after sweeping handily to the past three first division crowns, struggled with injuries and sloppy play through this season's early rounds. Lazio opened strongly, dropping just one of its first 10 games.

That loss, in the third round, was a heartbreaking 2-1 defeat at Milan's San Siro Stadium in a spectacular encounter: a fast-paced match with creative and solid play by both sides.

The top players shined, with now-departed Dutchman Ruud Gullit scoring Milan's goals — including the winner in injury time — and Italian international Giuseppe Signori feeding Croat striker Alen Boksic for Lazio's score.

Goalkeepers Sebastiano Rossia and Luca Marchegiani also were impressive.

Milan has recovered from its otherwise poor start to the year, although it can only count on wins among its 11 games without a loss.

Lazio must turn itself around and put an end to a two-match losing streak.

The Romans will have to do it without Argentine Jose Chamot, the cornerstone of the defence, who begins serving a three-match suspension.

That's welcome news for the red-and-black attack, which has begun to find its rhythm but is still inconsistent. Montenegro forward Dejan Savicevic, back from a one-game suspension, should find space for his imaginative play.

The story of the game will be Lazio's high-powered offense — which has registered a league-best 37 goals but just one in the last two games — against Milan's stingy defence.

When healthy, Signori and Boksic form the most potent one-two in Italy. Likewise veterans Franco Baresi, Paolo Maldini, Alessandro Costacurta and youngster Christian Panucci help Rossi protect his net better than any other backfield.

Of course, the Milan-Lazio encounter — like all others this week and future weeks — will be irrelevant if Juventus plays to its potential the rest of the season.

After tripping up with consecutive losses, Juve has recovered with back-to-back wins and hosts mediocre Napoli on Sunday.

Juve's Croat defender Robert Jarni is out suspended, which gives hope to Napoli's inconsistent attack. But the Turin side should be too strong at all positions, as it proved to be in a 2-0 victory in the clubs' third-round match.

Juve is also very strong at home: All three of its losses came on the road. Striker Gianluca Vialli has netted of his 10 goals at Delle Alpi Stadium.

The white-and-black must avoid its proclivity for let-downs against poor clubs such as Napoli, tied for 11th in the 18-team league.

Second-place Parma, three points off the lead, struggled to beat lowly Padova last Sunday and now travels to streaking Cagliari. The Sardinians, in eighth, have gone six straight matches without a loss.

AS Roma, in third, travels to Genoa, which played well against Milan. Roma gets back suspended midfielder Francesco Moriero and sweeper Fabio Petruzzi, but loses midfielder Francesco Statuto to suspension.

Other games Sunday: Cremonese-Fiorentina; Foggia-Sampdoria of Genoa; Internazionale of Milan-Brescia; Padova-Torino; and Reggiana-Bari.

Jordan's women's targets

By Aileen Bannay
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Having waited for the past few years, most players now cannot believe that the women's national basketball team is finally regrouped, and players are active again.

After the Jordan Basketball Federation announced the formation of five clubs to announce the team which last competed in 1993, the team for practice. Following a week of training, the team is now ready to compete.

Players representing the team are: Rana Haddad, Rana Al Khadra, Hind Al Khadra, Tamara Al Dajani, Indira Al Khadra, Rana Al Khadra, Hind Al Khadra, Tamara Al Dajani, Indira Al Khadra, Rana Al Khadra, Hind Al Khadra, Tamara Al Dajani, Indira Al Khadra.

Now the next big hurdle the Jordan Basketball Federation will have to jump is to secure funding to enable the team to compete in the Asian Championship scheduled for April when players are in their prime.

Meanwhile, players are enthusiastic about the effort in order to adapt to each other and to further improve their skills and team spirit.

According to the training programme, the team's coaches Fadi Al Sabbah and Samir Al Sabbah will be in charge of the team's training schedule of up to five hours a day, following the conclusion of the women's basketball season which is scheduled for April when players are in their prime.

Alberto Tomba clears a gate as he competes in the World Cup race in Japan.

Alberto Tomba, yet to win a World Cup race in Japan, expressed quiet confidence in Friday ahead of this weekend's giant slalom and slalom and said he would dedicate any victory to the memory of the Kobe earthquake.

The 29-year-old Italian has won 10 races this season and is well on course for his first World Cup overall title after 1991 and 1992.

"I was deeply shocked to learn of the aftermath of the earthquake. If I win I would like to dedicate my victory to victims. Some of them have been my fans," Tomba told a news conference.

More than 5,500 people were killed by the earthquake which devastated the major port city of Kobe.

"I am much as because it is getting better. Tomba's ability that competing years after season."

He has chance this here two also to count. "I want to win early as I wanted to said."

Tomba world cup Slovenia's and Marc embourg in Satoru Tomba's the discipline."

With Omar Sharif and Tania Hirsch, the Jordan Times Services Inc.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE

Both vulnerable, as South opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take? You side certainly has no chance to trump. This is the best spot. This is the best spot. This is the best spot.

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Jordan's women's basketball team targets Asian Championship

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Having waited for the past 12 years for it to happen, most players now cannot believe it has come true. The women's national basketball team has been fully regrouped, and players are actually training three times a week.

After the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) met with representatives of five clubs to announce the intention to regroup the team which last competed in 1983, forty players showed up for practice. Following a week of matches, the number was reduced to 20. Players representing Al Orthodoxy, Al Zahra, Rania Al Dajani, Indehra Qasabieh, Tala Al Zahra, Tamara Al Khadra, Hind Al Ghour, Suhair Alkhatib, Jumana Sali, Zein Sha'sha, Sira Naghaway, Ala Maheisen, Hala Khalaf, Zina Farah, Dima Shaded, Maryam Qardan, Maryam Ta'ani, Sira Ahaza, Hala Hassan, and Lubna Al Masri.

Now the next big hurdle the JBF and its women's basketball committee will have to jump is coming with the necessary funding to enable the team to take part in the women's Asian Championship scheduled for July 23-30 in Japan. Meanwhile, players are enthusiastic and putting up a big effort in order to adapt to each other's play while the coaches seek to further improve their individual all round skills and team spirit.

According to the training programme drawn up by the JBF, the team's coaches Fadi Al Sahbah and Saleh Al Zaher, the 12 players of the team will be named in May after a thorough training schedule of up to five times a week and following the conclusion of the women's championship which is scheduled for April when players will be busy

playing for their respective clubs.

The coaches have advised that the JBF arrange some friendly matches against Syrian or Lebanese teams, host an Asian team in Amman in June and then play an Asian team on the way to Japan so as to be best prepared before the possible participation in the Asian Championship.

Despite the fact that the JBF had seemed serious about maintaining a national women's team, most players do not think they will have the chance to represent their country in Japan for the simple reason that the JBF has a budget of JD 12,000 while the youth's and men's teams also have their respective championships in the Philippines and Japan. Each delegation will cost the JBF a minimum JD 15,000.

In addition, players have become disillusioned by the offhand approach the women's game has received from officials over the past years. The JBF's regrouping of the women's team was quite overdue since a regular annual championship has been held since 1989 and many players have since quit sensing that their commitment to the game was leading nowhere.

Although having only a single two-week-long competition as an incentive to play, Al Orthodoxy, Al Ahli and Homentmen maintained women's teams until 1991 when Al Jazireh entered the competition finishing fourth. They took third place from Homentmen in 1992 and clinched the trophy by scoring a major upset against Al Orthodoxy in 1993. Al Orthodoxy regained the crown in 1994 in an incomplete championship when Al Jazireh abruptly pulled out of the competition citing differences with the JBF, while the only other competing team was Abu Nisair, a lowly newcomer. Homentmen and Al Ahli stayed out of the competition with an incomplete lineup, while Al Watani registered a team for the first time but did not take part.

Cavs upset Magic 100-99

CLEVELAND (AP) — Terrell Brandon scored a career-high 31 points and sank the two winning free throws with 21.8 seconds left in overtime as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Orlando Magic 100-99.

The Cavs improved to 5-1 in overtime games and made Mike Fratello the 24th NBA coach to reach 400 career victories.

Orlando, which had a three-game winning streak end, has lost its last three road games.

Shaquille O'Neal led the Magic with 26 points. Dennis Scott had 19, including a 3-pointer with 12.3 seconds to play in regulation that sent the game into overtime.

Timberwolves 101, 76ers 97: In Philadelphia Doug West scored a season-high 35 points and the Minnesota Timberwolves overcame the early ejection of leading scorer Isiah Rider to defeat the Philadelphia 76ers.

Donyell Marshall added 17 points and 11 rebounds for Minnesota, which won for only the sixth time in 25 games.

West scored 14 of his points in the third quarter when the Timberwolves, trailing 62-58, scored 17 straight on their way to a 73-69 lead at the end of the third period.

Pacers 114, Pistons 88: In Indianapolis, Reggie Miller scored 31 points on 10-of-15 shooting as the Indiana Pacers broke a two-game losing streak with a victory over the Detroit Pistons.



Indiana Pacers' #32 forward, Dale Davis, fails to stop Orlando Magic #1 guard, Anfernee Hardaway, from scoring two points late in the second period of the game at the Arena in Orlando, FL. (AFP photo)

STANDINGS

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Orlando	38	11	.776	—
New York	30	17	.638	7
Boston	20	28	.417	17 1/2
New Jersey	20	31	.392	19
Miami	18	29	.383	19
Philadelphia	14	35	.286	24
Washington	12	35	.255	25
Central Division				
Charlotte	31	18	.633	—
Cleveland	29	19	.604	1 1/2
Indiana	28	20	.583	2 1/2
Chicago	24	25	.490	7
Atlanta	23	26	.469	8
Milwaukee	19	30	.388	12
Detroit	18	30	.375	12 1/2
Western Conference				
Midwest Division				
Utah	35	14	.714	—
San Antonio	31	15	.674	2 1/2
Houston	30	17	.638	4
Denver	20	27	.426	14
Dallas	19	28	.404	15
Minnesota	12	37	.245	23
Pacific Division				
Phoenix	39	10	.796	—
Seattle	34	13	.723	4
L.A. Lakers	30	16	.652	7 1/2
Sacramento	26	20	.565	11 1/2
Portland	25	22	.532	13
Golden State	14	33	.298	24
L.A. Clippers	8	41	.163	31
RESULTS				
Minnesota	101,	Philadelphia	97	
Cleveland	100,	Orlando	99, OT	
Indiana	114,	Detroit	88	
Chicago	107,	Washington	92	
Phoenix	120,	Portland	113, OT	
L.A. Lakers	102,	Seattle	96	
Boston	116,	Golden State	115	

Hill had 18 points on 7-of-11 shooting, 10 rebounds and two blocked shots.

Miller had seven points during an 10-3 fourth-quarter run that allowed the Pacers to open up a 99-81 advantage.

Bulls 107, Bullets 92: In Chicago Scottie Pippen had 24 points, eight rebounds and six steals as the Chicago Bulls defeated the Washington Bullets.

Toni Kukoc had 22 points and a career-high 12 rebounds and Steve Kerr added 11 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter, when Chicago held off a Washington rally.

Chris Webber and Juwan Howard scored 22 points each for the Bullets, who committed 25 turnovers in losing for the seventh time in their last eight games.

Suns 120, Trail Blazers 113, OT: In Phoenix, A.C. Green hit a layup in overtime to give Phoenix its first lead since the first quarter, then put the game out of reach with two free throws with 29 seconds left as the Suns beat the Portland Trail Blazers.

Charles Barkley had 35 points and 14 rebounds and made two crucial baskets early in overtime before he was ejected for his second technical foul with 2:17 left. Green finished with 22 points and 12 rebounds.

Lakers 102, Sonics 96: In Inglewood, California, Eddie Jones, coming off a 25-point performance in the NBA rookie game, scored 19 points as the Los Angeles Lakers beat Seattle to end the SuperSonics' 10-game road winning streak.

The Lakers outscored Seattle 28-17 in the third quarter as the SuperSonics made just five of 25 shots from the floor and trailed 87-72 going into the final period.

Nick Van Exel added 19 points for the Lakers and George Lynch had 15.

Gary Payton led Seattle with 24 points, Shawn Kemp had 20 and Detlef Schrempf 17.

Celtics 116, Warriors 115: In Oakland, Calif., Dino Radja's layup with 1.9 seconds remaining gave the Boston Celtics a victory over Golden State, keeping interim coach Bob Lanier winless in two games.

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Italian Alberto Tomba clears a gate as he wins his 10th World Cup race earlier this month (AFP photo)

Tomba will dedicate win to Kobe victims

FURANO, Japan (Agencies)

Alberto Tomba, yet to win a World Cup race in Japan, expressed quiet confidence in his ability to win this weekend's giant slalom and said he would like to dedicate any victory to the victims of the Kobe earthquake.

The 28-year-old Italian has won 10 World Cup races this season and is well on course for his first overall title after finishing runner-up in 1993, 1991 and 1992.

"I was deeply shocked to learn of the aftermath of the earthquake. If I win I would like to dedicate my victory to the victims. Some of them have been my fans," Tomba told a news conference.

More than 5,300 people were killed by the earthquake which devastated the major

port city of Kobe.

"I am enjoying skiing as much as I ever have. Both because I am winning and because the end of my career is getting near," he said.

Tomba left open the possibility that he would continue competing for up to two more years after his successes this season.

He has given himself every chance this weekend, arriving here two days before his rivals to counter jet lag.

"I wanted to come here as early as possible because I wanted to erase jet lag," he said.

Tomba now has 1,050 world cup points, followed by Slovenia's Jure Kosir on 570 and Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg on 563.

In Saturday's giant slalom, Tomba's main rivals will be the discipline's defending

champion Austrian Christian Mayer, Liechtenstein's Achim Vogt and Swiss Michael Von Gruening.

In the slalom on Sunday, Kosir and Olympic champion Thomas Stangassinger will be Tomba's most dangerous opponents.

Asked if he would compete in a super-giant slalom event later this season to ensure the overall title, Tomba once again ruled out any such possibility.

Picabo Street beats Seizinger

In Are, Sweden Picabo Street of the United States beat Katja Seizinger of Germany by 41 hundredths of second to win a women's World Cup downhill Friday.

Street flashed down the Olympia course, shortened to 1,801 metres because of a heavy snowfall in the past week, in 1 minute, 9.11 seconds.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANAN HURSH
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
S: ♠KQJ9876 ♣KQJ653 ♦KQJ653 ♠KQJ9876 ♣KQJ653 ♦KQJ653
A—You would like to play in your better combined major, but unfortunately, there's no way to accomplish that. When holding two five-card majors and a weak hand, simply sign off in your stronger suit. Bid two hearts.

Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
S: ♠KQJ9876 ♣KQJ653 ♦KQJ653 ♠KQJ9876 ♣KQJ653 ♦KQJ653
A—You would like to play in your better combined major, but unfortunately, there's no way to accomplish that. When holding two five-card majors and a weak hand, simply sign off in your stronger suit. Bid two hearts.

Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
S: ♠KQJ9876 ♣KQJ653 ♦KQJ653 ♠KQJ9876 ♣KQJ653 ♦KQJ653
A—You would like to play in your better combined major, but unfortunately, there's no way to accomplish that. When holding two five-card majors and a weak hand, simply sign off in your stronger suit. Bid two hearts.

Cinema	Tel.: 634144	Cinema	Tel.: 699238	Cinema	Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155
PHILADELPHIA		PLAZA		CONCORD		AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
Yusra, Mahmoud Hamedieh in The Immigrant Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Mahmoud Hamida — Madiha Kamel — Hassan Al Asmar in Satan's Gate (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD '1' SPECIALIST Shows: 12:30, 8:15 SPEED Shows: 2:45, 10:30 CONCORD '2' ROBOCOP '3'		SUM'A in the satirical play HI CITIZEN Composed and directed by Mohammad Al Shawarrah Daily from 8:30 p.m. Children's play The Ninja Turtles Show Directed by Akram Abu Ragheb Daily at 10:30 p.m.	Presents Abu Awwad in the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed on Saturdays & Sundays

Ekeus to probe Iraq's biological programme data

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraq has the capability to develop biological warfare agents within weeks although it does not appear to be actively building the weapons to deliver them, according to a U.N. official.

U.N. inspectors believe Baghdad has the expert knowledge and the equipment — chemicals and centrifuges — needed for production, Tim Trevan, a spokesman for the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq, said.

The commission is charged with the dismantling of Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, a condition of the cease-fire that ended the 1991 Gulf war.

Commission chief Rolf Ekeus left for Baghdad Thursday on a routine trip to review the elaborate network of cameras, sensors and overflights used to detect any attempts to revive the weapons programmes.

He also plans to press Iraq officials for information on their past biological weapons programmes.

In December, Mr. Ekeus reported to the Security Council that Iraq's account of its past biological weapons programme was "minimal."

Despite Iraq claims that its programme was nascent and defensive, "indications all point to an offensive programme," he said.

Mr. Trevan said that all the equipment and chemicals found by inspectors has legitimate purposes, such as producing medicines.

But he warned those same goods could be used to develop cholera, tuberculosis or other agents, and Iraq could do so within weeks if the inspectors left.

Several months ago, U.N. inspectors discovered several kilograms of a compound in which deadly germs could be cultivated at the Al Hakem animal feed plant, Mr. Trevan said.

U.N. inspectors destroyed

the compound after Iraqi officials could not prove it had a legitimate use, he said.

U.N. inspectors monitor the Al Hakem plant and other plants that could be converted to produce biological weapons through routine visits, by cameras installed at the plants and by testing samples of chemicals and products, Mr. Trevan said.

The U.N. commission reports to the Security Council every six months on Iraq's weapons programmes. The reports have portrayed Iraqi officials as evasive and deceptive in meeting inspectors' demand for information.

Iraqi compliance with the U.N. inspectors in setting up the monitoring programme is one of the Security Council's conditions for lifting the oil and trade embargo the United Nations imposed against Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The New York Times reported Thursday Baghdad has set up an underground network to export oil and bypass the U.N. sanctions.

Quoting unnamed oil industry executives and traders, the Times said the illicit sales have generated up to \$800 million in the past year for Iraq.

Hundreds of trucks take the crude oil to Turkey or Iran across Kurdish territory in the north of Iraq. The Kurds, who fought the Iraqi army immediately after the war, did not interfere with the trucks because they are allowed to collect a tax on each one, the Times said.

Dozens of small tankers also sail from the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr, where the oil is reloaded onto other tankers bound for Mediterranean markets.

Once it is out of the country, the oil moves easily since Iraq sells it for \$3 a barrel, compared to a market price of \$15.

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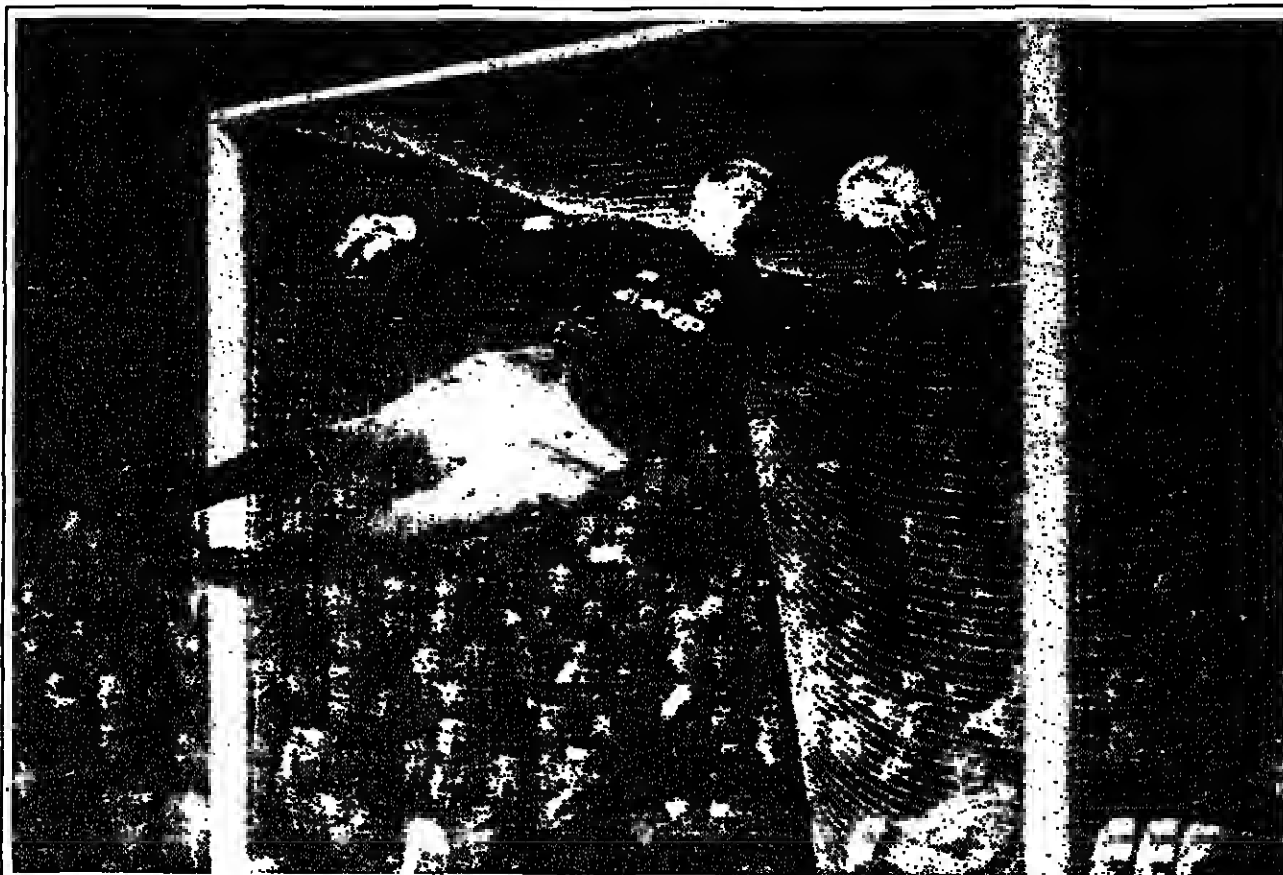
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LENS IN ACTION: Goalkeeper Catch, first prize sports by David Spurdens, Sunday Express U.K. in the World Press Photo contest and exhibition '95 (AFP photo)

Christopher: No hasty action on Jerusalem

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Secretary of State Warren Christopher has cautioned against "precipitous action" in moving the U.S. embassy in Israel to occupied Jerusalem.

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ter calling for the U.S. embassy to be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem once those talks end in 1999.

The president has indicated a good deal of sympathy for the position taken by that letter but he has also said he thinks we should do nothing to interfere or disrupt the process by which the parties might reach their own conclusion," Mr. Christopher said.

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U.S. officials and independent analysts say Jerusalem is probably the most difficult of all the issues facing Israel and the Palestinians.

During his presidential campaign, President Bill Clinton told Jewish leaders in New York in March 1992: "I believe in the principle of moving our embassy to Jerusalem, but I do not think we should do anything to interfere with the peace process."

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"to assist those who are taking risks for peace," Mr. Christopher said that because the Palestinian Authority "has taken major risks" in order to carry out the declaration of principles between Israel and PLO, "it is much in our interest to continue to support economic development within Gaza and Jericho."

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Hamas threatens to kill Musa Arafat

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — The armed wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, threatened Friday to kill one of Yasser Arafat's top security officials unless the arrest of its members stopped.

"The bullets of Qassam will not be forgiving," read a statement signed by Izzeddine al Qassam, the military wing of Hamas.

"The fifth of the military intelligence, headed by Musa Arafat, have arrested many Qassam heroes and put them in jails," said the statement distributed at Friday prayers at the Izzeddine Mosque, a Hamas stronghold in Gaza City.

The statement marked the first strong anti-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) warning issued in Gaza since clashes between Palestinian police and Hamas supporters left 13 people dead on Nov. 18.

"You must know Musa Arafat, and all those behind you, that we will not remain helpless this time ... we have been quiet for too long," the Qassam statement said.

The security official is no relation to Yasser Arafat, the PLO chief and head of the Palestinian self-rule authority.

"To the honourable brothers in the Palestinian Authority, we ask you and those in Fateh to stop people like that. We don't want to create strife," Qassam said.

It was the first mention of arrests among Hamas' armed wing.

Hamas said "the Jews, through their agents" in the self-rule authority sought to cause a bloodbath among Palestinians.

"We in the Izzeddine Al Qassam brigades will not stand idle this time and your struggle from Qassam will exact a very heavy price," the statement said.

Palestinian police have cracked down on radicals, rounding up 20 Hamas men in the last two weeks, according to Emad Fajali, a leader of the group.

But he said none of them were Hamas armed militants, and nor had police impounded weapons, which the Qassam statement claimed.

About 30 members of Islamic Jihad, a smaller group responsible for killing 21 Israelis near Tel Aviv last month, were also detained.

Like most Hamas political leaders, Mr. Fajali dissociates himself from his group's armed wing. "This is not our way of dealing with matters," he said of the threat.

At Palestine Mosque, meanwhile, Hamas supporters staged a short play mocking Palestinian police as corrupt and siding with collaborators against those fighting the Israelis.

In one scene, a Palestinian police officer, dressed in a green beret and dark sunglasses, sat in his office with his feet propped on his desk.

An assistant brought in a collaborator with Israel. The suspect was about to be sent to a cell when the officer's phone rang and he was ordered by a superior to release the man.

At a few minutes later, a bearded Islamic activist was brought in on charges he fired at an Israeli army patrol. The officer beat the suspect, ordered his men to send him to a cell and then shouted, as they walked away, "kill him."

Hamas and Islamic Jihad have claimed responsibility for a number of attacks since October that have killed 56 Israelis.

A pro-Arafat mosque preacher on Friday accused Syria of backing the suicide bombers in order to disrupt the Israel-PLO autonomy accord and prevent the expansion of self-rule to the West Bank. Israel has said that it would not withdraw from West Bank towns until Mr. Arafat proved he could foil suicide attacks.

"Syria used to be very concerned about getting back every inch of Palestinian territory," Sheikh Hijazi Birhawi said at the Kabeer Mosque where Mr. Arafat attended noon prayers.

"Why doesn't Syria send its own suicide bombers to Israel?" asked the preacher.

According to official figures, Islamic fundamentalists last year carried out 2,725 acts of violence targeting mainly infrastructures, transport and telecommunica-

(Continued on page 7)

COLUMN

Charles blessed with gospel

LONDON (AP) — The Prince of Wales has rarely been blessed this enthusiastically. Los Angeles' Crenshaw elite high school gospel choir delivered an inspired rendition of God bless the Prince of Wales to Prince Charles at his home in London's St. James' Palace.

"It was wonderful," he said. "You must teach the Welsh how to sing it." The prince, who first met the choir during a visit to Los Angeles in November, invited them to his home when he heard they planned a European tour. His charity, the Prince's Trust, helped organise accommodation and transport for the choir. Choir mistress Iris Stevenson brushed off royal protocol to give Prince Charles a hug as she bad on their last meeting.

"The kids think of the prince as a friend," Ms. Stevenson said. "He's very kind and he's made a big impression on them. We pray for the prince in his daily duties and it comes from our hearts."

Afterwards, the choir toured the cavernous palace. "It's a gorgeous place — and big too, if I might say so," said 16-year-old soloist Leland Julian.

Police halt classes at "illegal" university

SKOPIJE (R) — Macedonian police stopped lectures at an Albanian-language university, declared illegal by the authorities, within hours of it opening near the western town of Tetovo Thursday. Eyewitnesses said there was no violence but university rector Fadil Sulajman threatened to call on ethnic Albanians to prevent police intervening again Friday. Sources at the private Albanian Television (ART) in Tetovo said police stopped classes after 90 minutes and prevented lectures in philosophy and the theory of literature. A police spokesman said about 80 students had gathered on Albanian religious premises in the village of Poraj outside Tetovo where most of the population are ethnic Albanians. He alleged that Mr. Sulajman told police that "the university will continue to work, no matter what the price, and that if police continue to prevent the lectures he will call on 200,000 Albanians to defend him."

Taiwan to bar ex-convicts from elections

TAIPEI (AP) — Taiwan will restrict the political aspirations of former convicts in a bid to curb the growing influence of organised crime in politics, Justice Ministry officials said. Those convicted of involvement in seven types of felonies, including drug trafficking, extortion, prostitution, possession of firearms and organised crime — will be barred from running for elected posts, the officials said. First-time convicts would be allowed to run five years after their release if they had not committed additional crimes, the officials said. Second offenders, however, would be banned for life, they added. The proposal, which still needs approval from the Central Election Commission and parliament, was made in view of the growing number of gangsters involved in election activities, the officials said.

83-year-old jailed for killing wife

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France (AFP) — An 83-year-old man suffering from prostate cancer has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for killing his wife, thus becoming France's oldest prisoner inmate, court officials here announced. Basile Roditis, who was sentenced Tuesday by the court, was charged with fatally shooting his wife Norma, 79, in the throat last October. He claimed that her death was a suicide but the couple's four children testified that their mother was not depressed and described their father as a tyrant who demanded "absolute submission" from his wife. Mr. Roditis defended himself by attributing his temper to sexual problems he experienced because of his cancer treatment. The couple had been married 36 years.

Paris rally protests Algeria killing

PARIS (AFP) — Several hundred demonstrators protested in Paris Saturday against anti-feminist violence in Algeria after the killing of a prominent women's leader by suspected Islamic fundamentalists. The 300 demonstrators, mainly Algerians who have fled their country after the rise of Islamic protesting against the killing Wednesday. The protesters, support and those who oppose talks with fundamentalists to end the conflict, also called for the repeal of the one-party regime in 1984. Unknown gunmen shot the city of Tizi Ouzou, 110 kilometres east of Algiers (see page 12).

Yeltsin speech attacked from all Russian sides

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin's state of the nation speech was attacked from all sides of the political spectrum on Friday for proposing no new solutions to Russia's old problems.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov dismissed the speech, delivered on Thursday, as "useless, shameful" and devoid of any attempt at listing priorities for action.

On the other extreme in the Duma (lower house of parliament), former liberal Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov said Friday that Mr. Yeltsin had ducked the essential question: "Who is responsible for the power crisis (in the Kremlin)?"

Similarly, the newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta said the speech was the result of rivalry in Mr. Yeltsin's entourage between hardliners and democrats — "those who say everything is alright and the others who complain that nothing works."

The newspaper added: "Yeltsin's speech was written by bureaucrats. It will not be applied by the bureaucrats."

A debate on Mr. Yeltsin's address in the Duma failed to materialise on Friday because parliamentary leaders were attending a conference on relations between the Kremlin and regional authorities.

A few parliamentarians cautiously identified one or two positive elements in Mr. Yeltsin's speech, although they said it was not clear how the president could implement his proposals.

Yegor Gaidar, former reformist prime minister and leader of the liberal Russia's Choice party — the largest group in the Duma — said that Mr. Yeltsin's speech was "rather positive."

But he indicated that further reaction was premature until concrete policies emerged from the president's pledge to pursue economic reform, currency stabilisation, privatisation and the fight against inflation.

"Our support or lack of support won't be based on declarations, it will be based on practical policies," Mr. Gaidar said.

However, he criticised the president for refusing to denounce Russia's use of armed force to crush secessionists in Chechnya.

Mr. Yeltsin, referring to the military's botched handling of the separatist rebellion in Chechnya, stressed the need for a more efficient and streamlined army. But he gave no details how this would be done, or where the money would come from.

Ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy rejected the idea. He told journalists: "A small professional army won't save Russia." Instead, he urged a military